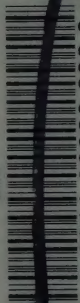


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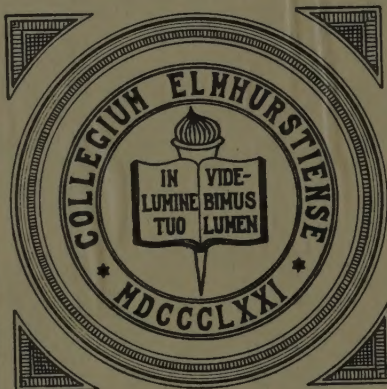
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# ORIGINS OF SOCIOLOGY

*By*

ALBION W. SMALL

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## PREFACE

The American sociological movement has become an assemblage of techniques for investigating the part which the group factor has played, the part which the group factor is playing, in different areas of human experience.

Until recently the sociologists did not clearly realize that the group factor in experience was an unoccupied center of operations. Nor did they realize that their gropings after a base for introducing a new variant into interpretations of human experience were converging toward this center.

This book was first published serially in the *American Journal of Sociology*, January, 1923–November, 1924, with the title "Some Contributions to the History of Sociology." It does not deal with the maturest, but only with the most elementary, manifestations of the sociological tendency. It is an attempt to show the falsity of the general impression that sociology is like the popular notion of a comet—a monster with an orbit from nowhere to nowhere. The book sustains the main thesis that during the nineteenth century the social sciences were half-consciously engaged in a drive from relatively irresponsible discursiveness toward "positivity" or "objectivity," and that, at its time, the initiation of the American Sociological Movement was as truly a lineal continuance from the previous tradition of social interpretation as was any other of the tendencies which varied the technique of historiography, or economics, or political science.

The book does not purport to be a prospectus of a history of social science. It is not even a complete outline of the history of sociology. It is a syllabus and the beginning of a source book. The most easily authenticated line of descent, between prescientific social rationalizings and the sociological branch of positivistic social science, is through the German historians, and economists,



and political scientists. The book traces almost exclusively that succession of antecedents and consequents. The author has in manuscript the first draft of a syllabus entitled, "The Development of Sociological Consciousness in the United States." It is supplementary to this book and to the monograph, "Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States."<sup>1</sup> It tries to set in order the most notable tendencies in American sociological method up to the present date. Possibly some literary executor may think it worth editing for publication.

In motive this book is an appeal for more attention to the historical and methodological aspects of social science, as the most effective counterpoise to the drag of specialization toward provincialism.

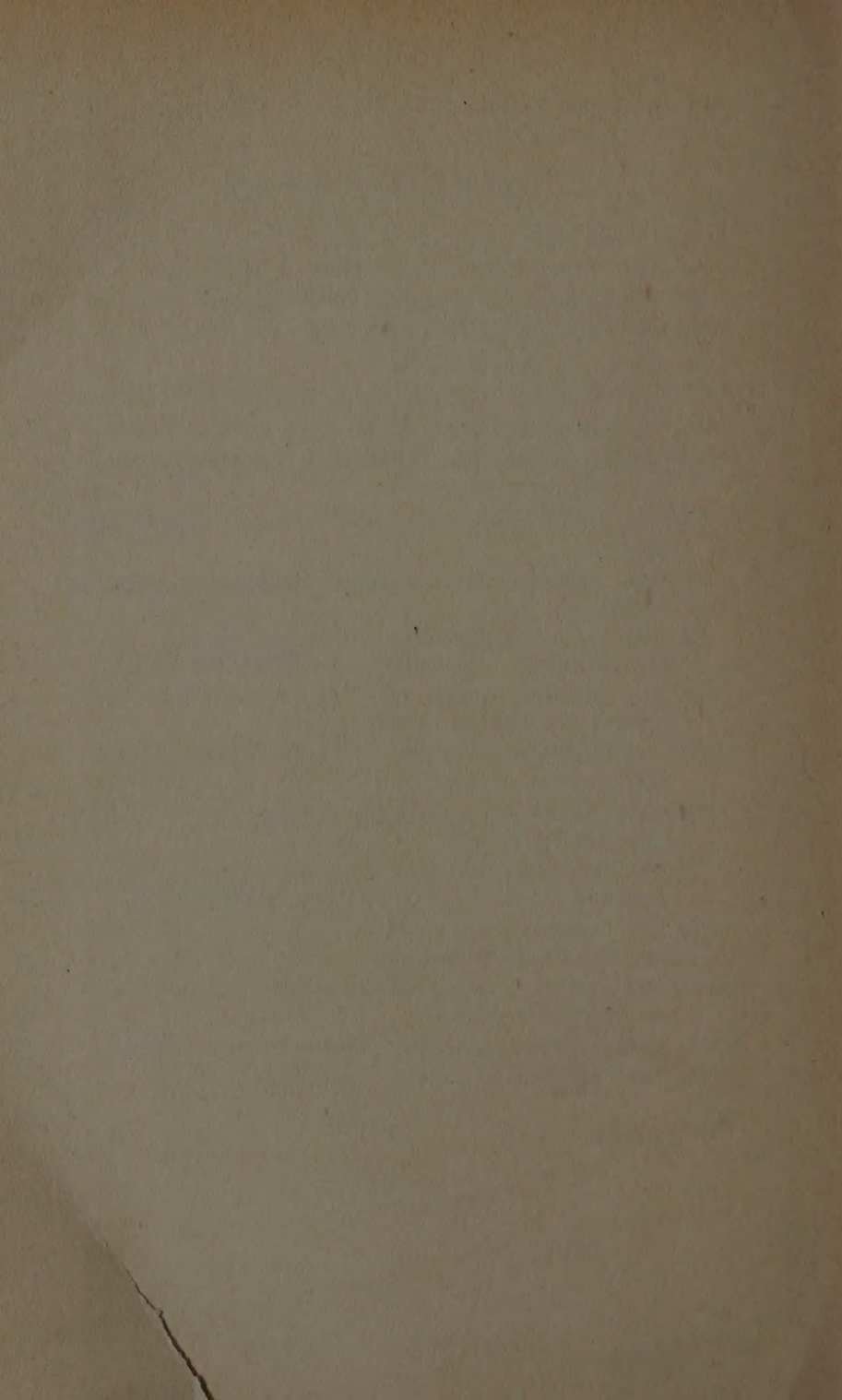
ALBION W. SMALL

May 11, 1924

<sup>1</sup> *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1916.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The *Sociological Review*, Volume XI, Number 1, 1919, opens with a paper by Mr. S. H. Swinny, entitled "Sociology: Its Successes and Its Failures." Discounting the insularity which Americans detect in nearly all British handlings of social theory, the paper contains edifying suggestions. We quote:

From very early ages men have been interested in social problems, questions of government and economics, of the relations between different classes in the same communities, or between communities organized in different ways. But the existence and recognition of such problems did not necessarily involve their solution, or the possibility of their scientific treatment, any more than the strong interest of mankind in the maintenance of health and the cure of disease led in early times to biology or to the application of science to the medical art. For the study of the more complex sciences there is needed both the development of the scientific spirit and the establishment of those scientific laws in the simpler sciences on which the more complex rest. . . .

In reality, however, investigations undertaken solely with immediate practical ends are hardly more favorable to the building up of abstract science when the purpose is construction, than when it is destruction. Kepler in astronomy, Galileo in mechanics, were not thinking of particular improvements in navigation or machinery, still less did they limit and control their work by reference to those practical needs. Darwin took many of his illustrations from the practice of stock-breeders, but his great discovery was no outcome of a crusade to improve the breed of cattle. The three great sociologists of the nineteenth century, Comte, Spencer, and Le Play,<sup>1</sup> though they were all deeply interested in the human future, and valued social studies chiefly as a basis for the wise ordering of social life, desiring in Comte's words, to know, in order to foresee, and so provide; yet recognized that for the first purpose, discovering laws of social structure and progress, a disinterested study of all relevant facts was necessary—a study similar in spirit to that of the great physicists, chemists and biologists. Possible applications of social sequences would not help in their discovery, however useful they might be when once discovered to direct and control social action. . . .

<sup>1</sup> This book does not concern itself with the merits of this estimate.

This very brief<sup>1</sup> account of the history of sociology, reduced of necessity to a bare and uninteresting catalogue, may nevertheless be sufficient to show that considerable success has been obtained in building up an ordered knowledge of social structure and development, especially if we consider that sociology had to await the growth of the simpler sciences on which it rests, nevertheless, it must be admitted that its present state has, reasonably or unreasonably, given rise to much disappointment. Complaint is made that it gives us no adequate foreknowledge, and therefore no guidance in action, that there is no agreement among sociologists as to general principles, and that such laws as have been formulated are inapplicable to concrete cases. From one standpoint it has no relevance to the actual social world; from another, it is a mere collection of odds and ends, empirical rules, unconnected suggestions, unworthy of the name of science, according as the view of the social reformer or the sociological student is adopted. Without challenging these pessimistic opinions, I propose to consider what are the causes that have hitherto retarded the progress of sociology, either generally throughout the scientific world, or under the special circumstances of these islands. These difficulties may be ranged under six heads:

- (1) The complexity of the science.
- (2) The abuse of specialism.
- (3) Materialism.
- (4) The failure to distinguish between science and its practical applications.
- (5) The close connection of the subject matter with human interests and ambitions, feelings and prejudices; and
- (6) In great part as a result of this, the neglect of what has been already done, the resolve to start anew from the beginning.

Some of these difficulties are inherent in varying degrees in all sciences, some are specially characteristic of sociology; some are due to the folly of sociologists, some to the general infirmity of human nature.

After summary treatment of the first five difficulties, Mr. Swinny continues:

(6) *The neglect of work already accomplished.*—It is partly at least as a result of the preceding, of the desire of so many investigators to discover not what is true, but what is useful to support their plans, that sociology suffers from this particular feature, that everyone proposes to start a new sociology of his own. In other sciences, the work already accomplished is taken as the starting point—not indeed as something absolute and unalterable, but as the

<sup>1</sup> And, we may add, *quite misleading*.

foundation for new discoveries which in their turn will confirm, invalidate or modify what has hitherto been received. Even when an innovator rejects his predecessor's work, he at least thinks it necessary to examine it, and give reason for his dissent. It is in this way that all the earlier sciences have grown. It is this method that has been pursued even by the early sociologists. Vico, founding himself on the Baconian methods, rejected many of the doctrines of Hobbes, but only after a careful and reasoned examination. Comte accepted much of the work of the eighteenth century, and only modified the results obtained as a consequence of a discriminating study of Montesquieu and Condorcet. But now we find students who have never read Comte or Spencer, who perhaps have never even heard of Le Play, starting out to found sociology as if it were virgin land, still untilled or perhaps only just discovered. The results are sometimes ludicrous; as when a learned American professor unwittingly repeats Vico, Chicago having actually progressed as far as Naples had done—two hundred years before.<sup>1</sup> Sociology must come into line with the other sciences.

In this country, the last three dangers are particularly strong. We have not a large body of professional investigators, like the university professors of some foreign lands, and we are therefore spared the importance attached to minor points or trivial discoveries, or the wordy controversies about nothing of moment; but on the other hand we suffer from the occupation of the field to a large extent by men, sometimes without training in science and often devotees of particular social reforms. Without them it is difficult to keep a Sociological Society in existence, with them it is difficult to keep it sociological. It tends to become, as in the description of a previous society of somewhat similar aims, occupied only with the three D's, "Drink, Drains, and Divorce." This is not to deny the place of practical applications, always provided the discoveries and applications are separately pursued, and the applications are applications of real scientific knowledge, such for instance as the applications by the Civics Committee of the work of Comte and Le Play. Here in England, the whole atmosphere has been rendered unfavorable to disinterested science both by the habits engendered in the industrial revolution, and even earlier by the accommodation and compromises of constitutional and parliamentary government. Yet in spite of all this, England in the past has made immense

<sup>1</sup> It would be interesting to learn more details about the supposed occasion for this sneer. Certainly Dr. George E. Vincent was lecturing at the University of Chicago on Vico as a pioneer in sociology a quarter of a century ago—as soon as the doors of the University were fairly open. Not even the Germans imagine that every time they set down a commonplace they must document the whole succession of utterers of it, back to the time when it was a novelty.



contributions to science. Happily, the war with Germany has given a new orientation to our studies and our scientific ideals. We no longer worship the spirit of detail, characteristic of Germany. Perhaps we shall now turn to the larger views and more organic conceptions of France. There has been another danger, not perhaps general, like those I enumerate, but very obvious here, in the U.S.A., and above all in Germany,<sup>1</sup> of giving up all thought of generalization and of allowing science, and especially social science, to become a mere matter of the collection and docketing of facts. This was called avoiding "premature generalization," though the propriety of a generalization depends on its conformity with the known facts—few or many—it being liable to modification or rejection as new evidence comes to light. To collect facts without generalizing when possible is to run the risk of being smothered by one's own accumulations. It is of happy augury that the Germans, the great exemplars of this plan, have lost that influence over the human intellect, which was perhaps as harmful as their power in more material spheres.

The problems of sociology are difficult and beset with dangers—but man has surmounted other difficulties and braved other dangers. Let us go forward, warily it may be, but still with good heart and hope, carrying on the work of our predecessors and preparing the way for those who shall come after us.

In recent years I have come to the conclusion that the best way of finding out what sociology is, and what it is worth, is to approach it historically. I hold the same opinion about the best ways of studying all the other social sciences, but the larger matter need not be argued.

Until 1917 I had not acted on this later belief. I had started my own treatment of sociology each year in the graduate school with a course on general sociology; that is, an introduction to the technique of sociology.

In general, Mr. Swinny's phrase, "neglect of what has been already done," sums up my reasons for the belief that a survey of the history of sociology is the best preparation for intelligent and creative work in the subject.

A few years ago Mr. Carnegie gave \$10,000,000 to endow retiring allowances for college professors. A board of trustees was appointed

<sup>1</sup> It is to be hoped that the argument now to be developed will at least dispose of the impression that we do well when we classify methodological tendencies under national labels.

to administer the fund. The director of the foundation set to work on a plan to provide from the proceeds of the fund comfortable incomes for the old age of all professors in a certain grade of institutions in the United States and Canada. Presently he had worked out a scheme which was a beauty on paper. The trustees promptly approved it. Soon it was published, and it was hailed by the academic world as a wonder, surprise, and admiration. For a few years the men who were eligible received their monthly checks from the fund and were happy; while others who, though equally needy, for one reason or another were ineligible, waxed more and more envious. Then came a note of apprehension. The director of the fund let fall a hint that the task undertaken by the fund might turn out to be beyond its earning capacity. Then Mr. Carnegie added a large sum to his original gift. Still the liabilities of the fund proved to be in excess of the income. Again in a short time the announcement was made by the director which was convertible into the plain English that the fund was bankrupt. What was the matter? Why, exactly the same thing which Mr. Swinny finds to be one of the matters with sociology. The organizers of the enterprise neglected to find out "what has already been done" in similar lines. The consequence was that they wasted valuable years, and brought discredit and suspicion upon a worthy undertaking, by trying to extemporize experience. If they had investigated more thoroughly than they did, they would have learned that in various countries of Europe, England especially, and to a certain extent in this country, a vast amount of experimentation is on record which has eliminated certain ideas as impracticable, and has validated certain other ideas which must be assimilated in a feasible scheme of old-age insurance. It has worked out therefore, that the Carnegie Foundation, after humiliating failure, has done what it should have done in the first place. It has studied as thoroughly as it could all previous experience in related enterprises, and it has reorganized its whole plan so as to give full value to all discoverable experience bearing on its purpose.

For more reasons than one the Carnégie episode might well be adopted as the classical analogy to picture one of the most outstanding weaknesses of the social sciences in general, and of sociology in particular. Speaking now of the latter only, and confining myself for the moment to sociology in the United States—a few scholars a generation ago became dissatisfied with the way things were going among the different social sciences. After fretting fruitlessly for a while, they decided to create a science of their own. They advertised that they were going to furnish the world with a science that would correct the errors of the older and futile social sciences.<sup>1</sup> They would substitute a social science as it should be, capable of explaining all about society, including principles and rules for guiding society in the future toward a speedy perfection. They adopted the name “sociology,” and I am frank to admit that they accepted it as a compliment when, after a few years, European scholars began to refer to “sociology” as the “American science.”

In the light of matured experience there is something pathetic about the earlier history of sociology in the United States. Its outstanding and ingrowing fault was “neglect of what had been already done.” We did not know that much of anything had been done, and we were not under a sense of responsibility for finding out whether anything had been done. We were thus in a pitifully amateurish attitude. From the viewpoint of modern science, the first step in science is finding out what has already been done in the particular field. Even our elementary schooling is based upon this principle. Children are taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, to save them from spending their lives vainly trying to do over again, without assistance, what it took centuries for previous men to work out, viz., ways of recording and uttering their ideas by symbols that have readily understood meanings. If we are going to be carpenters, we do not go apart by ourselves and try to invent novel types of tools. We get a chance to learn how to use tools already invented. Possibly in the course of our lifetime we

<sup>1</sup> I was one of them; and this way of putting it is humble confession.



may learn how to put one or more of those tools to more skilful uses than has been the wont of previous carpenters; or we may add one or more to the tools previously in existence.

So in the abstract or generalizing sciences. To save enormous waste it is unquestionable economy to spend all the time necessary finding out what has previously been done. One of the readiest ways of distinguishing the educated from the uneducated man is to probe into the acquaintance of the man in question with other workers in the field in which he claims knowledge. In my experience as editor of the *American Journal of Sociology* for twenty-seven years, I have found this test to be an almost invariably reliable criterion for deciding whether a man has anything to say that I can afford to spend my time considering. What does he know about the attempts that other people have made to throw light upon the particular subject which he is discussing? The men are relatively few who have qualified themselves to illuminate any kind of social relations by finding out what has been done, and what attempts and failures to do something on the problems in question are on record for our instruction. The men are relatively numerous whose boldness as expositors of social problems amounts to folly, in part because of obtrusive ignorance of the experience of previous men with similar problems.

Whether would-be social scientists understand it or not, the indicated task for social science, before it is entitled to the name science at all, is to *interpret the meaning of human experience, and to find out how human experience may be directed in the future toward a larger output of life-values*. To be fully equipped as historian, or political scientist, or economist, or sociologist, or psychologist, one should know all the blind gropings toward understanding of human experience, all the gradual systematizings of theories about human experience, all the tools of analysis which have been devised for inquiry into human experience, all the tentative conclusions which have been reached about cause and effect in human experience, all the expired and surviving hypotheses in explanation of

human experience, and all the methods of inquiry which at the present time have stood the test of trial and are rated by scholars as fit for use in further investigation. This course is an attempt to make a beginning in forming such acquaintance in a very general way for social science as a whole, and in a slightly more detailed way for sociology in particular.

In short, an enormous amount of effort has been expended, for how much more than 2,500 years we cannot accurately measure, on ways and means of understanding the human lot. Those efforts have resulted in certain conventional ways of considering the human lot. The primary course in respectable social science must cover introduction to those conventional ways of approach. Otherwise we begin far in the rear of the positions which our predecessors have occupied. We commit ourselves to experiences which are unnecessary because men before our time have done exploration, and left the record of it, which in part or wholly anticipates our attempts. Whether that record is of success or failure, it at all events notifies us whether further effort of that particular sort is necessary.

Our present business then is to make out connections between this special procedure in social science which goes by the name "sociology" and all the other procedures in social science which severally and collectively try to interpret the human lot. By and large these experiences, from the dawn of history, have more nearly resembled the game of blind man's buff than they resemble scientific procedure as it would be defined by a modern methodologist. Yet modern scientific procedure has been the outgrowth of these same blind-man's-buff antecedents. There is enough still left of the blind-man's-buff sort of pseudo-science to make the judicious grieve. As I have said, one of the most effective ways of showing up near science, or not-near-at-all science, and of justifying responsible science, is to keep in mind the stages of growth through which consciousness of what is involved in reliable knowledge of social relations has emerged. These generalities have reached far

beyond the early stages of the argument, and we return to first principles.

Early in the nineteenth century the idea took possession of leading scholars in Europe that the chief scripture given for our instruction in the conduct of life is human experience. The consequence followed at once that this supreme scripture must be studied with all possible zeal. Feverish explorings of human experience followed, and the different types of search presently took the forms which we know as the "social sciences," chiefly history, political economy, political science, later ethnology, anthropology, psychology, statistics, and sociology.

A rudimentary fact about each of these so-called sciences is that its devotees usually supposed that *it* was the one and sufficient key to unlock the secrets of human experience. Each thereupon developed a provincialism of its own and advertised it as *the wisdom inculcated by human experience*.

It would be possible and instructive to draw a parallel between the vagaries of the social scientists of various names, in trying to get wisdom from human experience, and the different schools of biblical interpretation. Just as theorists of innumerable sorts have mangled and shredded the Bible so as to make it teach the most incongruous and contradictory counterfeits of wisdom; just as believing and unbelieving students of the Bible alike have abstracted phrases from it, and constructed those abstractions into systems of positive or negative faith, more or less distantly related to the substantial contents of the Bible when comprehended in its genetic relations, so the different exponents of social science tore human experience to pieces, and reconstructed the shreds and patches which particularly interested them into so many competing interpretations of human experience.

Using an arbitrary date for convenience, it may be said that at the turning-point, 1870, the so-called "social sciences" had not passed this stage of fragmentary, uncorrelated, and consequently heterogeneous interpretation of human experience. In the rough

this is still the case. Only a few men in the world are aware of the rudimentary and fragmentary condition of the so-called social sciences. We are in the full tide of the movement to advance into a more mature stage of social science. Sociology is an incident of that movement. In itself sociology is not likely to be permanently different in its relations to social science as a whole from the other divisions of social science. Each of these has concentrated its attention upon a selected aspect of human experience. Temporarily and accidentally sociology has functioned as an advocate of co-operation among the social sciences, in order to make progress from a rabble of pseudo-social sciences into a comprehensive social science. This responsibility does not belong of right to sociology more than to any other division of social science; but under present circumstances the sociologists feel most concern about emphasizing the necessity.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, human experience is one volume. It must be read as a whole. Each part must give meaning to every other part. It may and must be analyzed into its elements. It can be understood only by synthesis of its elements.

Ever since 1800 there has been a broadening and deepening of the belief that human experience is the chief source of science. At the same time the case has been making up for fusion of sciences into a comprehensive federation of science. In that process each pretended independent science has become on the one hand more scientific, on the other hand less independent. That is, real science has developed in actual interdependence of each science upon all science.

The conspectus which follows is necessarily restricted to those phases of this evolution which are closest to the development of sociology. The immediate purpose is to show that sociology was not created by the fiat of a few individuals who had no attachments to previous and contemporary scientific growth. On the contrary,

<sup>1</sup> See Small, "The Future of Sociology," *Proceedings of the American Sociological Society*, XV (1920), 174 (esp. p. 186).



sociology was merely the latest differentiation of scientific procedure within a containing movement which must be understood in general in order properly to understand the functions of sociology.<sup>1</sup>

The plain truth about the so-called social sciences is this: Human beings had been in the world an unknown number of centuries. Human beings were born, they worried through their brief terms of struggle to keep themselves alive, they begot offspring, and they died—all this pitiful minimum occupied probably far and away the greater part of the total expired time of the human race on the earth up to date, before it occurred to anybody to reflect very much upon what was taking place among human beings, beyond that rule-of-thumb reflection necessary in the hand-to-mouth processes of keeping alive. Then followed, in different branches of the human race, the stages which we may call the mythologizing era—the stages in which a few peculiar people in each tribe or race dreamed daydreams about what was happening in the world. These people wove their dreams into mental tapestries which after a while were copied pretty generally into mental pictures carried in the brains of the members of the respective tribe or race. These cartoons, for instance the Homeric or the Virgilian cosmology, or the conceptions of the beginning of the world, and specifically of the Hebrew people, carried in the Book of Genesis, for no-one-knows-how-long satisfied, or at least appeased, the demands of men's curiosity about all the human affairs which lay apparently outside the range of the everyday struggle for existence. The eras in which these mental fabrications dominated thinking include the first two of the three "stages" into which Comte would have divided human history, viz., first the theological, second the metaphysical. The facts which Comte was feeling after were, in a word, that all peoples, until recently, have accepted the fancy pictures which their seers have offered them as reports of reality, instead of demanding literal returns. Furthermore, the makers of these fancy pictures, in all races, have inclined at first

<sup>1</sup> See *Encyc. Amer.*, article "Sociology," p. 208.

to draw them in terms of imaginary supernatural beings, in imaginary dealings with actual human beings. This stage would be illustrated by the Homeric account of the siege of Troy, in which the result was described not as the necessary effect of military causes, but as the arbitrary reversal of military causation through the intervention of partisan gods. The same mental stage and process are illustrated by the story of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, or of the miraculous provisioning of the Israelites with manna.

Then the next more sophisticated stage of thinking about human experiences, the stage which Comte called the metaphysical, is that in which there is less use of imaginary supernatural personalities, and more use of generalizations which have the logical rôle of universal principles. Familiar specimens of these, on the purely rational or cognitive side, have become almost proverbial in survivals from the Platonic or Aristotelian philosophy. Equally typical and still more familiar specimens peculiarly ethical are the leading thoughts of the later, more spiritual Hebrew prophets.<sup>1</sup>

When I say that people's thoughts about human experience have been mostly uncritical I am trying to convey the meaning that people in general have been content to accept versions of human experience without inquiring closely into the credibility or the sufficiency of the evidence in support of the versions, or into the conclusiveness of the inferences drawn from the evidence. The same proposition may be put in the form: *As a rule, people have been credulous instead of critical.* This rule has held good, not merely of the untutored masses, but relatively of the men who have presumed to teach the masses.<sup>2</sup>

These propositions convey the truth about the so-called social sciences not less than about human thinking in general. There is merely a difference of degree between the man on the street in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Encyc. Amer.*, article "Sociology," p. 206, second column.

<sup>2</sup> For instances in the case of an eighteenth-century writer, see Small, *The Cameralists*, pp. 310, 311, 312.

Rome two thousand years ago, who believed that Atlas carried the world on his shoulders, and the professors who were lecturing on history, and literature, and law, and theology, and politics, and economics in European universities in 1800. With enormous differences in detail of sophistication and with conspicuous exceptions, yet, measured by the standards which their successors profess to use today, these holdovers from the eighteenth century were still as a rule men who took tradition very nearly at face value, instead of compelling it to produce its credentials. In 1800 the world of human experience had been explored by numberless observers whose competence and incompetence to see what passed before their sight covered an immeasurable gamut of variation; and all that had been observed in human experience had been passed upon by innumerable thinkers and philosophers correspondingly unequal in their qualifications for summary judgments. On the whole we may characterize the body of tradition that had passed as social science up to 1800 as unsophisticated, unreliable, irresponsible. Then began a movement which in about eighty years made social science relatively sophisticated, reliable, responsible. The differentiation of sociology was one of the incidents of this evolution. This has not been the conception of their specialty which American sociologists as a rule have held. This course, then, is primarily an attempt to show the vital connections between sociology and the whole modern unfolding of social science.

In other words, this course should make plain that the movement of thought in the United States which is known by the name "sociology" is not an isolated phenomenon. It is not a freak. It is not something that has an existence by itself, independent of and unrelated to the rest of the thinking of mankind. It should show that the precise contrary is the case. The sort of thinking that men in the line of succession from Lester F. Ward, in the United States, have been doing, is simply the inevitable evolution of thinking which had been done by philosophers, and historians, and political scientists, and economists, and psychologists before

the type of thinking distinctly known as sociology was differentiated. The germs of everything that is valid in sociological thinking were already present in the older types of thinking, before the sociological movement took visible shape. Men who were content with the older types of thinking simply were not aware that the undeveloped germs of new-thought activities were worth developing. A few men were dissatisfied with the old types of thinking. That is, they believed these older types did not go far enough, did not penetrate deep enough, did not arrive at reality enough. They did not say in so many words that the old types of thinking had actually turned up clues to more penetrating thinking. They did not even at first realize that they were following clues which predecessors had found. They actually followed out clues that the more conventional men disregarded. We can see now that these sociologists were simply taking up activities which carried on the processes of intellectual evolution, at points where the more traditionally minded men stopped. The latter were comparatively content with statical repetition of what had been thought before.

In other words, between 1800 and 1880 everything that we now call social science went through a change which may be likened to the passing of an individual from babyhood to adolescence. The sociologists have not generally appreciated the fact that their specialty came into existence as an organic part of this maturing of social science as a whole. In fact we can understand neither our own division of labor nor social science in the large unless we are fully aware of this connection. The chief aim of this course then is to exhibit the whole modern sociological movement as an integral part of the transition of social science in general from the amateurish to the scientific stage. In short, sociology was not born without parents. Its lineage is as old as men's efforts to understand the human lot. Its immediate ancestors, although few of these men recognized their offspring, were the scholars who changed the childish social science of 1800 into the adolescent social science of 1880.



The sociologists gathered their impulse from factors in the work of previous social scientists which were regarded as relatively negligible by the men whose thinking had worked out these mental factors. Sociology is thus another case of "the stone which the builders refused." It has not become "the head stone of the corner." It has at least taken an important place in the scientific structure.

However we express the matter, the truth to be inserted into the record is that sociology is not a tangent, shooting off from nowhere toward nowhere relative to the steady orbit of human thought. Sociology is a normal advance of human thought from less developed to more developed dealings with the human reality. The work which the sociologists have been doing would inevitably have been done sooner or later by somebody, under some sort of name, or without a distinctive name, unless the human mind ceased to concern itself with explanation of human experience. Indeed, there is the wherewithal for a brilliant Doctor's dissertation on the subject "Sociology outside the Ranks of the Sociologists." It would be possible to make a dramatic exhibit of the smuggling into conventional social science, not to speak of popular thought, of processes of sociological analysis and construction that have been carried on in all the social sciences, during the last two decades in particular, by men who mostly have denied with scorn, and often with curses, that they have anything in common with sociology.

The limitations of this discussion compel recourse to those indexes of the movement which are least obscure. Accordingly the following analysis will make use of German incidents more freely than evidences from other countries. It was by no means purely a German movement; but the relations of the rapid developments in different divisions of social science to one another are more obvious in German scholarship than elsewhere, and they accordingly are most available for exposition of an evolution which followed parallel or converging courses throughout the Western World.

The movement will be described from our own point of view, not from that of the men who took part in it between 1800 and the present. That is, we shall look back upon the movement so as to bring meanings to light which were not visible, or less visible to the actors at the time, which have acquired significance through consequents not credibly foreshadowed. All the incidents that were woven into the movement have value for us in the present connection only as they proved to promote a complex of processes one outcome of which was sociology as we know it. We shall try to formulate what occurred, not merely what the executive agents of the occurrences had in mind and set forth in articulate plans. We shall proceed in this way in order specifically to waive the question, How much of the outcome which is now visible was consciously in the purposes of the men whose work we must evaluate? We must ask less about the workers with whom we shall be concerned: What did they deliberately will to do? and more: What did their work amount to?

Like all investigators, the students of social science in the early nineteenth century were, on the one hand, like the young men who volunteer as soldiers in any war. They do so in response to certain deep impulses and under the stimulus of certain more or less undefined purposes, but at the same time with certain quite concrete and immediate aims. When they are once at the front, they find themselves so submerged in the details of their special work that they may know less than men at a distance what the great operations are to which their particular movements are subordinate; and they may know still less about the unforeseen tendencies which their individual services are actually energizing. These early-nineteenth-century scholars both foresaw and did not foresee. We shall concern ourselves very little with charting the limitations of their vision, and we shall do all we can to exhibit the results which their work had for method in social science, and particularly for that division of labor in social science that we call sociology.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Encyc. Amer.*, p. 207.

It is not always possible to show that a given fact discovered in one field of knowledge has any relation to facts in other fields of knowledge. It is scarcely possible, however, to make out the relations between a fact in one field of knowledge and the processes which are of first concern to investigators in that field, without uncovering similarities of relationship between details in that field and details in other fields. For example, after the effect of a baser currency upon the circulation of a better currency had received the formulation known as Gresham's Law, it was easier to assert the moral commonplace that a baser ethical code, tolerated in a given society, tends to supplant a nobler. It is certain, at all events, that since 1800 there has been on the whole an accelerated process of the infiltration of ideas between all the different departments of knowledge within the range of the social sciences, not to speak of reciprocal modifications between the physical and the social sciences. This process, on the one hand, has reacted universally on the methods of all the divisions of social science. For instance, there have developed since 1800 so-called "historical schools" in each of the major divisions of social science. Whether or not the men inside or outside of these schools have correctly apprehended the historical factor, the emergence of these "schools" has attested partial assimilation, by men not primarily historians, of the lesson upon which historians have placed all sorts of emphases since 1800, viz., that *we cannot fully know any human fact, or any human situation, without knowing it in its relations as a consequence of its antecedents*. On the other hand, the same interchange of influence is evident in the fact that historians in recent decades have rendered cumulative homage to the discovery of the lateral types of social investigation, so to speak, i.e., while thinking of historical investigation as longitudinal alone, we cannot fully know any historical epoch or episode. We must be able to see it also as an item of the entire contemporary plexus of human activities. Hence the ill repute of that type of history which asks for credence simply as history of any selected filament of human relations, whether war, diplomacy, economics, art, dogma, or whatever.

In short, and again anticipating, science of all sorts, and for our interest particularly social science, has ceased to be predominantly a wisdom about more or less arbitrarily delimited "provinces," and it has become first and foremost a technique of dealing with "problems." Human problems have aspects which have to be investigated in turn by the use of techniques which have been respectively brought to a high degree of efficiency by one or another of the departments of knowledge as conceived and controlled in the obsolescent provincial way. Today, however, the investigator of problems asserts his right to use every tool of investigation which is available for dealing with any aspect of his problem which he may have encountered. In other words, the method of social science today merges into the method of correlation instead of resting with the method of abstraction.

We come now to the particular application of all this to that latest of the major divisions of labor in social science known as "sociology." As was pointed out above, the earlier sociologists betrayed their intellectual consanguinity with their contemporaries by proclaiming themselves the high priests of an independent cult, to which independent cult, however, they in the same breath declared, all other scientific cults must one day acknowledge their subordination. We need not stop to specify the particulars in which this state of mind was a survival, not merely of eighteenth-century provincialism, but of the still more archaic mythologism referred to in the beginning of this introduction. Nor need we ask whether all sociologists even now have entirely freed themselves from the bonds of this earlier misconception. The central fact for our present purpose is that sociology is primarily a specialization of technique in social science for which the older social sciences had been discovering problems, and fashioning rude tools, and trying out tentative processes, long before the workers in those divisions of science were aware that they were creating a demand for a new division of labor; and long before there were enough recruits for this division of labor to be taken seriously by their



more conventionalized colleagues. By sociology, at this point, let us understand, not any abstractly defined procedure, but literally the work which systematic thinkers have carried on under that name since Comte in France, Schäffle in Germany, and Herbert Spencer in England. This sociology then is something unthinkable except as an energizing of certain prying into human facts, the competence for which had been developed, the preliminaries for which had been practiced, the rougher tools for which had been fashioned during apprenticeships in one or another of the older social sciences.

Sociology is not a comet as popularly pictured, viz., a body in space coming from nowhere and bound nowhere. Sociology is merely one among several major responses to that demand which began to be urgent shortly after 1800, for closer approaches to objectivity in our conceptions of human life. Virtually, and in some cases almost literally, the sociologists said: "We may accomplish this closer approach to precise knowledge of the human mystery by going ahead in the line of clues to human relations which historian, legist, economist and mental philosopher have proposed, and by persisting in the use of these clues as long as they put us on the track of details in human relations which have not been analyzed down to their ultimate elements by any other method." In one respect sociology is to the older divisions of social science what the use of the spectroscope is to chemistry, or blood analysis to physiology. That is, it is the addition of a certain technique by means of which phenomena partially investigated by other techniques may be still further investigated. Note that this is in flat contradiction of the ways in which the subject has been presented, and as a rule still is presented by sociologists.

Every once in a while some economist, quite likely in the most conciliatory spirit, seriously taxes the sociologists' control of their risibles by repeating in public that smug imagining of the earlier economists that political economy deals with things *as they are*,

sociology deals with things as (the sociologists think) they *ought to be*. As though the forms and behaviors of human groups in general are less "things as they are" than interpretation of certain artificially abstracted and generalized phenomena conceived as "the market," and assumed by hypothesis to be the performances of "the economic man"! As though the mental contents and social attitudes of members of a trade union, or an employers' association, are less "things as they are" than statistics of the supply and demand of labor and capital!

In fact, from Herodotus to Lenin and Trotsky, there has never been a pretense of understanding social facts which was not accompanied, in the mind of the pretender, by some form and force of desire to use the knowledge for the sake of control, i.e., to know facts as they are in order to make the facts as the would-be knower thinks they ought to be. The differences between historians, political scientists, economists, on the one hand, and sociologists on the other, are not chiefly along the line of cleavage which the economic imagination has drawn. Granting, to simplify the argument, that the sociologists thus far have averaged somewhat more sanguine than practicers of the more traditional techniques about the date and the degree of possible transmutation of things as they are into things as they should be, it remains true that the essential meaning of sociology, as a phase in the development of method in social science, is that it has pursued investigations of which the older social techniques had consciously or unconsciously encountered the necessity, but for which the older techniques furnished neither the apparatus, nor the personnel, nor the mandate. Declaring their independence of obstructive orthodoxy in social science, the sociologists proceeded to follow out discoveries already made but undervalued by other social scientists; or they made previous discoveries points of departure for the development of a program, first as general sociology, later as social psychology. Men had to become Ishmaels from the tents of the recognized social sciences, and they had to take their chances of becoming

legitimized by academic adoption as sociologists, in order that social science as a whole might enter upon its next cycle of evolution. The reconstruction of all social science is proceeding today, whether particular social scientists are aware of it or not. The basis of reconstruction is the more or less openly avowed perception that social science will remain superficial until it has built its foundation upon adequate knowledge of the psychical and physical antecedents and concomitants of social behavior. Sociology and psychology are those members of the family of social science which are concentrating their attention most directly upon the work of laying these foundations.

We cannot fully understand anything human unless, among other ways of apprehension, we understand it genetically, i.e., in its growth, in its evolution. Present problems of social interpretation are no exceptions to this rule. We cannot take a fully intelligent part in today's thinking unless we are intelligent about the antecedents which have prepared the way for present thinking. Hence the résumé which is to follow, of certain achievements since 1880, first of the historians, second of the economists, third of the political scientists, which prove to have been progenic of sociology.

The limitations of this survey must, however, be still more explicitly defined. The plan certainly does not contemplate even a prospectus of a complete history of social science, not even a prospectus of a complete history of a single division of labor in social science, not even of sociology.<sup>1</sup> The attempt will not even be made to signalize achievements of historians, political economists, political scientists which to historians, political economists, political scientists themselves are the most notable accomplishments of their division of labor. The aim is not to find in the work of historians, political scientists, and political economists the whole, or the chief part, or an orderly correlation of any parts, of the maturest work of the sociologists; for nothing of the sort is there.

On the contrary, we may invert our former method of presenting the program and describe it in this way. We shall put in evidence

<sup>1</sup> See Merz, *History of European Thought*, 4 vols.

certain of the findings of historians, economists, and political scientists which would serve our purpose if we were trying to support the proposition that sociology has no right to existence as a separate division of social science, because its generic ideas have all been arrived at by one or another of the earlier divisions of social science. We shall recall certain of these cardinal ideas in the setting in which they occurred in the older types of social science. We shall not attempt to pass upon the degree of importance which has been assigned to them, or which they had exerted in the older social sciences. We shall rather emphasize them as they deserve in their relation as key ideas for sociology.

More than this, we shall not attempt to prove that these anticipations of later sociology in the earlier forms of social science contained sociology in the sense in which the major and minor premises of a valid syllogism contain the conclusion. The truth is rather this: in the drive toward objectivity which has occupied scientists with accelerated intensity since 1800, stages and phases have succeeded one another more pragmatically than logically. For instance, it would be no more and no less false to assert that Darwin was a direct logical inference from the historical spirit of the early nineteenth century than it would be to assert that twentieth-century sociology is a logical inference from Darwinism. What we may assert in the two cases is this: first, we cannot imagine Darwinism emerging in a world not yet fertilized by the general notions of temporal continuity which the historians had cultivated; yet the historians neither did nor could produce Darwin. In a like way, second, we cannot imagine general sociology and social psychology emerging in a world which had not become familiar with the rudimentary concepts of organic evolution; yet those rudimentary concepts of organic evolution neither did nor could produce sociology. At the same time the various divisions of social science have interacted in a much more intimate sense than these comparisons imply; and it is accordingly true that there have been vital connections between the growth of each and the growth of all.



At this point we may let this statement of fact stand on its merits. It will be in order a little later to formulate certain derivatives from the fact.

Within recent years the previously prevailing view that the subject-matter of science may be assorted like a stock of goods in a department store has become obsolete, or at least obsolescent. The subject-matter of science is not now visualized as blocks of material, but as problems of the relations between factors involved in processes.<sup>1</sup> When we use the term "process" in sociology, and especially when we say that the human lot is a process, or a process of processes, we mean simply that the human lot is made up of incessant interchanges of influences of which people, through their membership in groups, are both the active and the passive transmitters. Of what sort and how many these influences are, what are their ways of reacting one upon another, what results from the reactions which was not visible in the organized influences themselves—such questions as these set tasks for sociology. From our present viewpoint, comprehension and control of human phenomena are impossible along the lines of so-called social sciences, each dealing with an abstracted aspect of human relations treated as complete in itself. This is as true of those aspects of the human process which appeal peculiarly to the sociologists as of those which hold the attention of each other type of social scientist. On the contrary, all discoverable aspects of human relations must be combined into an exhibit of the whole, by use of each and all of the techniques as they are brought into requisition to analyze and evaluate related factors of the common problem.

A conception of social science has prevailed up to the present time which cannot much longer survive. Only a few voices have

<sup>1</sup> Ross's book, *Foundations of Sociology*, was the first in English to put much stress on the term "process" as a scientific social category (see pp. 91 *et passim*). Small's *General Sociology*, which appeared only two months later, might not unfairly be described as a treatise on the category "social process" (see pp. 1 *et passim*). Ratzenhofer had anticipated both books, and the term "social process" had been used in a semi-unconscious and amateurish way by a great many people.

been raised in direct challenge of that conception, but changes have been taking place in our whole manner of thinking which must presently make the views of social science that were universal a generation ago seem as archaic as the physical science of the eighteenth century. In one fundamental respect the sociologists started with a conception which was common to all the philosophically minded social scientists of the earlier types. Between these earlier thinkers there were intense rivalries over the claims of their respective "sciences." When men calling themselves sociologists began to claim recognition as social scientists, especially after the claim began to be allowed by universities, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the older social scientists almost forgot their immemorial rivalries in their common contempt for these sociological upstarts. Altogether apart from the merits or demerits of the sociologists, however, their conception of social science was in one sense fundamentally identical with that of historians and economists and political scientists. Each class thought of its peculiar "science" as destined in the end to be a finished account of everything worth knowing about human life. They thought of social science, particularly as represented by *their own type* of social science, as destined sooner or later to set in order everything really vital in past and present human experience.

This attitude may be represented by a partial analogy. Suppose an architect had planned a legislative building for a nation. Suppose he had ordered every piece of material, stone, metal, wood, textiles, paints, hardware, etc., necessary to complete the building. Suppose every material ordered had been delivered upon the site of the proposed building, and that then the architect had died, leaving no copy of the plans and specifications in accordance with which he intended the building to be fabricated. The nation would be confronted with the problem of finding architects and builders who could solve the puzzle of using those materials, no more and no less, so as to realize in a physical structure the conception of a building which had existence only in the dead architect's mind.

Although the earlier social scientists never confessed it in quite this way, it is easy to see now that all of them, including the sociologists, who indulged at all in speculations about the larger aims of science, treated the aggregate of human events, past and present, like a collection of structural elements such as the building material in our analogy. Most of them assumed some conception of nature, or of the Supreme Designer, with a structural scheme prearranged to parallel the architectural design in the analogy. Then they assumed that the task of social science, their own part of social science in particular, is to organize all the miscellaneous events which have filled the career of mankind from the beginning up to the present moment into a schematic combination, in which each occurrence will have its appropriate place, and in which the relation of each occurrence to every other occurrence will be evident. It is desirable to get this conception as clearly as possible before our minds, in order to bring out as clearly as possible by comparison the view which is taking its place, as to what social science may, can, and must be.

It should be frankly admitted that sociology would not have been born when it was, and its early history would not have been what it was, if this conception of scientific possibility had not been entertained. It stimulated a few men to risk the attempt to realize the conception which men before them in other branches of science had dismally failed to realize. At the same time we must insist upon the truth that the sociologists, in this respect, were merely experimenting with a chimera which had over and over again lured social scientists of all the older types.<sup>1</sup>

As it will appear a little later, one of the most conscious efforts of the more objective historians of the latest half-century has been to fortify themselves against suspicions of identity with the so-called philosophers of history; i.e., speculative rather than research types of historical thinkers. In a closely similar way the sociologists of

<sup>1</sup> This criticism of others is at the same time a confession. For years I was one of the sinners, and one of the most convinced sinners, in this respect.

today are more or less consciously and explicitly repudiating the architectural, structural conception just indicated, which they or their immediate predecessors unblushingly advertised a generation ago. The totality of human experience is too big, too complicated, too unexplorable, to be exhibited by the human mind as a complete and inclusive system of functioning parts, with each event throughout the length and breadth of human experience bearing its actual relation to all the other events. That conception must be abandoned as impossible. For instance, not a single man now living, not even a member of a royal house which has preserved the records of its generations longest, can trace his ancestry back through more than a trifling fraction of the period which separates us from the earliest of the human species. How inconceivably more difficult it would be to trace the precise and complete antecedents and consequents, physical and mental and moral, which have formed the actual links in evolution from the original human group to each of the civilizations at present domesticated on the earth. No! the thought of such comprehension can no longer be entertained by a responsible mind. Our ideal at present is discovery of typical, qualitative relationships of antecedent and consequent, of cause and effect, of harmony and disharmony, of stability and instability, of constructiveness and destructiveness, in human groups.<sup>1</sup>

We understand that there are enormous differences in the applicability of this ideal, dependent for instance upon the remoteness or nearness in space or time, or upon the simplicity or complexity of the group immediately in question. We believe that, within limits, not only qualitative but quantitative knowledge of reactions within groups may be gained. We believe that men may, and with progressive use of available means for accumulating such quantitative and qualitative knowledge of human conditions will, become from generation to generation more sophisticated and competent to control their situation in the interest of increasing

<sup>1</sup> See Small, *General Sociology*, chaps. xxxvi and xxxvii, "Some Incidents of the Social Process"; also Ross, *Social Control and Principles of Sociology*.



development of human capacities. Within recent years the development of social science in general and of sociology in particular has manifested increasing deference to this conception. This survey and the analysis to follow will attempt to introduce social science in general and sociology in particular as mental processes converging toward and operating in accordance with this conception.

One of the latest notable books on pure sociology is a conspicuous illustration of the proposition, viz., Cooley, *Social Process*. A single passage near the close of the book (pp. 402-4) is in point here. The passage is notable for its constructive spirit combined with well-controlled temperance of expectation. In both these respects it represents the temper of the most judicious sociologists of today, in contrast with our more sanguine and less justifiable expectations of two or three decades ago.

The method of social improvement is likely to remain experimental, but sociology is one of the means by which the experimentation becomes more intelligent. I think, for example, that any one who studies the theory of social classes—the various kinds, the conditions of their formation and continuance, their effect in moulding the minds of those who belong to them, and the like—using what has been written upon the subject to stimulate his own observation and reflection, will find that the contemporary situation is illumined for him and his grasp of the trend of events enhanced.

By observation and thought we work out generalizations which help us to understand where we are and what is going on. These are “principles of sociology.” They are similar in nature to principles of economics, and aid our social insight just as these aid our insight into business or finance. They supply no ready-made solutions but give illumination and perspective. A good sociologist might have poor judgment in philanthropy or social legislation, just as a good political economist might have poor judgment in investing his money. Yet, other things equal, the mind trained in the theory of its subject will surpass in practical wisdom one that is not.

At bottom any science is simply a more penetrating perception of facts, gained largely by selecting those that are more universal and devoting intensive study to them—as biologists are now studying the great fact of hereditary transmission. In so far as we know these more general facts we are the better prepared to work understandingly in the actual complexities of life. Our study should enable us to discern underneath the apparent confusion of things

the working of enduring principles of human nature and social process, simplifying the movement for us by revealing its main currents, something as a general can follow the course of a battle better by the aid of a map upon which chief operations are indicated and the distracting details left out. This will not assure our control of life, but should enable us to devise measures having a good chance of success. And in so far as they fail we should be in a position to see what is wrong and do better next time.

I think, then, that the supreme aim of social science is to perceive the drama of life more adequately than can be done by ordinary observation. If it be objected that this is the task of an artist—a Shakespeare, a Goethe, or a Balzac—rather than of a scientist, I may answer that an undertaking so vast requires the co-operation of various sorts of synthetic minds—artists, scientists, philosophers, and men of action. Or I may say that the constructive part of science is, in truth, a form of art.

Indeed one of the best things to be expected from our study is the power of looking upon the movement of human life in a large, composed spirit, if seeing in it something of ideal unity and beauty.

We may sum up this introduction with the formula:<sup>1</sup> The problem of knowledge in the field of social science reduces to this: *What is the meaning of human experience, and to what extent have we developed a technique which may be relied upon to ascertain more of that meaning?* Assuming that credible interpretation of human experience is possible, our present inquiry is: What has social science as a whole done so far to determine valid methods of interpretation? The answer to this question is at the same time the answer to the question, Where did sociology start?

Putting the question in this way places us on a level above the partisan prejudices of the traditional detached social sciences. The survey which is to follow will lend little comfort to the claims of any particular social science to any preferred rank or authority. If we are sharers of social consciousness at its best, our fundamental interest as students of social science, in either of its divisions, is *knowledge of the meaning of human experience*. If any conventional division of social science has found a way to ascertain any part or phase of this meaning, well and good. If we find that any technique,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Encyc. Amer.*, article "Sociology," p. 208, first column.

or all the techniques together which have thus far been developed, leave any part of human experience uninterpreted, to that extent such technique, with its tradition of acquired interpretation, must rank as merely tributary to the desired whole interpretation of experience, and it is entitled to our respect simply and solely in the ratio of its service in throwing light on the main problem. With this understanding we are prepared for candid investigation of the question, *What have the social sciences done in the nineteenth century toward working out a reliable method of interpreting human experience?*

If this question were to be answered in full, it would be necessary to deal with the evolution of philosophy and psychology since Locke in England, since Descartes in France, since Wolff in Germany. Our limitations compel omission of this section of the survey. The one conclusion of modern philosophy and psychology which we may cite in passing is a cardinal commonplace in which, with changes of detail, these two types of inquiry find common ground with all positive science, namely: *Credible philosophy or psychology must be essentially positive or inductive more than it is speculative.* Stated in the more general form in which this conclusion merges with science at large: *All convincing interpretation of experience has to be generalization of experiences.*<sup>1</sup> In the first instance at least it must be more inductive than deductive. It must build up systems of explanation by inspecting the relations in which the portions of experience to be explained present their most revealing meanings. It cannot find outside of experience an external base line competent to serve as a fixed meridian from which to calculate the value of occurrences within experience. This principle has been most persistently and arrogantly attacked by heologians and their amateur followers.

This elementary conclusion of philosophers and psychologists is a first-rate illustration of a larger truth which the rest of the present exhibit will emphasize, viz.: This conclusion of the philoso-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Encyc. Amer.*, p. 208.

phers and of the psychologists did not remain hermetically sealed in the brains of philosophers and psychologists. It was not even written in a sign language legible only to philosophers and psychologists. On the contrary, it was communicated by one method and another, almost as fast as it began to take shape as surmise in the thoughts of philosophers and psychologists, to all sorts of thinkers. Indeed it is by no means certain in which division of human thought this conclusion was reached first, or in which division it became dominant first. It is certain that during the second half of the nineteenth century most of the cardinal divisions of science were industriously impressing it upon one another. It became a part of the cumulative acquisition of thought in general. Probably the majority of educated people have been disposed by their education to credit the creation of a demand for inductive thinking almost wholly to physical science. This is an unauthorized impression. No one can tell precisely how credit should be divided between physical science and other science for our present respect for inductive thinking as compared with a priori thinking. At all events, the philosophers and the psychologists must not be left out of the company of those who deserve credit for reaching the conclusion that real knowledge, in whatever field, must be derived from many cases accurately examined, and their common contents generalized. But this is the matter to be reiterated here: *No sooner had scholars in one department of inquiry—for example philosophers and psychologists—given new value to this conclusion in their own thinking than their judgment on the matter began to stimulate thinkers in other departments to revise or reaffirm their own judgments about the same problem.* The like has been the case with all other conclusions. As we shall see, this has been not less true in social science than in physical science, nor has it been less true as between different divisions of social science than between them and physical science.

With so much as a summary reference to the basic forms of knowledge, we turn to the more concrete forms of social interpretation. The present plan makes German attempts since 1800



to interpret human experience the center of attention. We shall use as our chief clue to the preparations for sociology some of the most significant changes during the evolution of social self-consciousness in Germany. The German factor in the evolution of European social self-consciousness in general is selected, not because the German phase of experience has unique value, but because the links in the chain of this experience are more easily traced in Germany than those of any other country.

I am aware that anyone who looks at the evolution of social science from my standpoint undertakes a heavier burden of proof than would have been necessary previous to 1914. No American can now hear German scholarship mentioned without demanding a reckoning with the charge that German scholars as a class, with German social scientists conspicuous in the class, hopelessly discredited themselves by their attitude during the war. I am aware that for a long time it will seem to most Americans like treason to science as well as to country to admit that there can be anything good in German scholarship.

My position on this matter can be stated very briefly and very unequivocally, and I hope it will justify itself. No American was and is more disappointed and disgusted than I was all through the war with the attitude of German scholars, some of them my own intimate friends. I think their conduct was disgraceful and humiliating. There were mitigating circumstances which I need not recite, which partially explained, while they did not excuse, the failure of German professors, along with other intelligent German citizens outside the military and governmental classes, to put themselves on record against the policy of their government. These are the reasons which President Wilson had in mind in his different assertions that we were fighting not the German people, but the German government. Allowing for all these circumstances, which affected all German citizens alike, I agree with those who assert that German social scientists have less excuse than the rank and file of citizens for their failure to stand out on principle against

war in general, and especially against that particular war and the German methods of fighting it. I agree that so-called social science of any sort is a pitifully futile affair if it proves to be impotent for political righteousness in such crises.

Nevertheless, when we begin to analyze the facts in their psychological rather than their political aspects, the conclusion which is forced upon me is quite as chastening, though not as incriminating, as the judgment which I have to pass when considering the facts primarily in their political relations. The conduct of the German professors during the war seems to me to be the most startling demonstration which history has ever staged of the detachment of academic science of all sorts from practical applications, and of the uncertainty whether expert knowledge and skill within the range of social science insures safe common sense in dealing with current social affairs—this in spite of the fact that so large a proportion of German social scientists, as I shall repeat later in greater detail, have been in close touch with actual politics.

In other words, the collapse of German social science as a guide to political righteousness, or even to far-sighted political expediency, during the late war, is an exhibition on a large scale of the falsity of the vicarious conception of intellectual training. The claims of the classicists had run against notorious practical refutations of their vicarious preconception, viz., that by concentration upon classical studies the mind might be prepared better than in any other way for any intellectual processes whatsoever which it might be called upon to perform. All but a few holdover classical theorists have so far seen the absurdity of this claim that the present tendency among academic people is to fly to the other extreme, and to assert that the only mental training which can assure adequate performance of a given sort of activity is habitual performance of that specific activity. There is no "something else just as good."

Whatever may turn out to be the truth about this general problem, the case of the German professors of social science amply

proves that their type of social science did not qualify them to function well in the type of social crisis which the war presented.

We should put the brakes on our inferring apparatus, however, before we jump to the unwarranted conclusion that the German social scientists are more perverse and futile in their mental operations than the social scientists of any other nation would have been if they had been plunged into precisely similar circumstances.

Nor should we infer that, because there was such an absence of adequate political light and leading among the German social scientists during the Great War, therefore social science is not worth cultivating.

There is a different inference and still a chastening one to be drawn from the facts, but not a finally condemnatory inference, viz., that social science at best, so far as it is at present developed, is in very immature infancy. The Germans have probably cut as many of the milk teeth of social science as the scholars of any nation, but wisdom teeth are far in the future everywhere.

Not to pursue the figure, the most obvious lesson of the German war for social scientists all over the world is the lesson of humility in appraisal of the present worth of social science as an authoritative basis for social programs. We may well take warning from the German instance, that social science must learn much wisdom now beyond its command before it can guarantee to its representatives dependability as oracles in times of severe social stress.

Meanwhile, there is a certain necessary relation between schooling and life. The poorest academic work has some degree of auxiliary value as preparation for cognate activities out of school. Academic thinkers may never be the world's best executive officers, but the world will always have better executive officers if there is an adequate supply of academic thinkers. Even his most ardent admirers will scarcely claim that President Wilson has been infallible, either as an academic thinker or as a statesman; yet after he is dead his most violent enemies will be found admitting that his academic thinking injected a force into American and world-politics which may prove to have raised the moral level of both.

So I say of German social scientists, they are not infallible, either as thinkers or as appliers of their thinking to action. In that, however, they are simply typical of social scientists of all nations. The German social scientists, like the German chemists, the German biologists, the German philologists, have worked through some of the pioneer stages of their divisions of labor in such a way that it would be folly to ignore their work and its meaning for further work. It so happens that the preliminary work on method in social science which the Germans have done is more open to inspection, and its relation to the differentiation of sociology is more accessible than the antecedents of sociology in any other nation. There is no "pro-Germanism" then, in the current sense of that term, in the use I shall make of German social science. I am merely dealing with facts which are no more bounded by nationality than the fact that an Italian invented wireless telegraphy and a Dutchman laid the foundations of international law.

As a matter of strict logic, the conclusions arrived at during the evolution of modern German social theories do not amount to proof that the German view of human experience, or the German view of the processes necessary in explaining human experience, is final. German experience in attempting to explain the human lot in general is merely one among many ethnic experiments upon this universal problem. As they stand today (i.e., as of August 1, 1914), German interpretations may turn out to have been in many ways far wide of the mark. In the present state of social science, however, the evolution of German social science up to 1914 furnishes important confirmation and support of the interpretations which are doing most to shape contemporary thinking all over the world. That is, when we survey the course of development in German social science as a whole, let us say from the opening of the nineteenth century to the opening of the twentieth, the tendencies and the resultants of German thinking were in striking conformity with the most characteristic modern conceptions of social relations on the one hand, and with the latest conclusions about the inevitable tendency in social interpretation on the other.



In particular, German experience furnishes the most dramatic illustration in the whole range of scientific literature of the fundamental sociological proposition that *valid social science cannot be many, it must be one*. In Germany since 1800 the separately named parts of social science have been more obviously parts of one science than anywhere else. Simple as this sounds, the proposition is no commonplace. It had cost the blind gropings of all the centuries to arrive at that consummation. Obvious as the proposition appears to a few minds, the majority of scholars today see no meaning in it, and a few jealously deny it. The clue to the difference between the social sciences of the past and the social science of the future is lodged very largely in this simple formula.

The formula may be expanded in this way: Suppose we undertook to report the whole reality of the Great War—its causes, its incidents, its effects—in terms of *man considered solely as a food-consuming animal*. The futility of such a venture might be exposed at first thought by the obvious consideration that, if consumption of food were the only interest involved, all Europe might easily have got all the food which the more thickly settled parts of the country could not supply by falling to and helping the Hungarians and the Russians cultivate their undeveloped soil. There would be no need of bloodshed if that were all. Suppose, as an alternative, we undertook to report the whole of the war, from causes to effects, in terms of man considered solely as an *acquisitive animal*. Again it would be an easy problem in arithmetic to figure out that, as affecting the one problem of producing the maximum amount of wealth per capita, the war was insanity. It would be efficiency of a much higher order to rule out destruction and to co-operate for production. Suppose we try in turn to report the war in terms of man solely as an animal with *political ambitions*, or with *intellectual strivings*, or with *aesthetic tastes*, or with *moral convictions*. Each of these attempts would at once prove abortive, for it would immediately run against the perception that the men fighting the war were not the sort of men which they would have had to be if either of these assumptions were in accordance with reality. Actual men

who fight actual wars are men prompted by a miscellany of motives. Anything approaching a scientific account of their conduct must bring into the explanation a credible report of the part which each constituent type of motives has played in producing the conditions that make for war, and in stimulating the precise concrete actions that marked the war. In other words, a scientific account of the war in its causes, its incidents, its results, must be among other things a comprehensive account of the total human nature of all the European peoples, in their reactions with all the physical nature, and all the acquired personal traits and social institutions which form the objective and the subjective environment of the existing generations. So of more generalized *science* of humanity. It must be comprehensive science of human beings wanting things and evolving more and more artificial programs in the course of endeavor to satisfy their evolving wants.

In other words, the net outcome of our attempts to interpret human experience thus far may be summarized in a few generalizations. One of the most significant of these, for guidance in the immediate future of social research, is that, in very slight variations from the previous formulas, *final interpretation of human experience is not to be found in abstractions from experience but in composition of abstractions into a reflection of the totality of experience.*

In a later section more will be said about the crudeness of all thinking about human affairs, especially in the generation immediately before 1800. At present, without further preliminaries, we pass to the first notable break that was made in the uncritical tradition of social science. We must put first in order, then, the *awakening of the historical spirit*. This factor might be indicated more exactly by the phrase, evolution of the *critical* historical spirit, or of "historical criticism" as the phrase is technically used.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Encyc. Amer.*, article "Sociology," p. 209, first column.

## CHAPTER II

### THE THIBAUT-SAVIGNY CONTROVERSY: CONTINUITY AS A PHASE OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE<sup>1</sup>

From Herodotus and Thucydides and Livy and Tacitus there had been many dignified and instructive accounts of passages in human experience. Impressive philosophies of human life had been composed in large numbers. Taken by and large, at the date 1800, criteria of knowledge in the field now occupied by the so-called social sciences were relatively inexact and inexacting. Our survey will follow the clue that since 1800 social science in Europe has been engaged in an increasingly conscious and co-operative *drive toward objectivity*, in the course of which a methodology of differentiation of problems has been matured, with corresponding divisions of labor, invention of techniques, and improvement of apparatus. Sociology is one of the divisions of labor and one of the combinations

<sup>1</sup> So far as he is informed, the present writer is alone among teachers of the history of sociology in beginning the treatment with the symbolical date 1800. The prevailing method seems to be supported by one or both of two misconceptions. First, sociologists demand: Is not the code of Manu or Moses, or Hammurabi or Solon, is not the ethical system of Confucius, is not the Indian, the Egyptian, the Greek, the Norse, the Iroquois mythology, is not the religion of Isaiah, of Buddha, of Mohammed, etc., etc., sociology? The answer is a categorical No! Data of this sort are instructive in their way, and may be made interesting to far larger numbers than will or should devote themselves to scientific methodology. Such material, however, is related to sociology precisely as the Alleghanies and the sands of Sahara are to geology. That is, this view blurs the distinction between the history of cultus and the history of a particular technique for interpreting cultus; between objective social facts and that program of prying into the meanings of social facts which we now call sociology.

Second, it is supposed that a history of sociology must reckon with everybody who is known to have reflected upon human relations since human records have been kept. The idea is closely related to that medieval methodology which prescribed the fall of Adam as the starting-point for the local history of Nuremberg or Ratisbon. Sociology is a species of procedure different from the Platonic philosophy or any later

of technique evolved in this total process. Sociology is bound to be misconceived if it is not apprehended in its relations within this larger movement. It is common knowledge that the place of honor at the head of the column proceeding toward objectivity belongs to the historians.

To understand all or anything in that mighty factor in the development of modern social science which is indicated by the phrase "historical criticism," to understand the evolution of method, either in the world at large or among the Germans in particular, it is necessary to lay repeated stress on the fact that the Germans, no less than other civilized peoples, especially since the Renaissance, had always admitted attention to the past to a respectable place in their thinking. If we refer to the more intelligent strata, it is not too much to say that the past was ever present with them. On the other hand, it was equally true of intelligent men everywhere that, with rare exceptions, the past as they represented it was a masked,

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effort after its kind. Sociology is different from the later so-called social sciences, just as they are different from one another. There is no doubt that, even since inductive, evolutionary, pragmatic, functional interpretation of reality established itself as a variant of deductive reasoning, the background of scientific processes is still some modification of the Aristotelian logic. This simply amounts, however, to recognition of the debt of all later thinkers to the prospecting of earlier thinkers. It does not call for treating a differentiated mode of thinking in terms of the opinions even of the outstanding thinkers before the differentiation had begun. Sociology is a twig on one of the branches of science. There is no logical inconsistency, to be sure, in basing an account of that particular twig upon voluminous treatment of the ecology and phylogensis of the main trunk; but if the aim is concentration, such procedure is wastefully inexpedient. Sociology did not fairly begin to differentiate from antecedent procedures in reporting human experiences until about 1880. There are sporadic utterances which may be taken as more or less prophetic of sociology all the way along from Plato and the Old and New Testaments, and St. Augustine, and Bishop Bossuet, and Vico, and numerous Germans a generation later; but none of them nor all of them together actually ended by any causal nexus which we can discover in the differentiation of that distinct type of procedure which we now know as sociology. Influences began to be visible, on the contrary, soon after 1800, which made visibly and immediately toward that differentiation. Our concern is with these, not with earlier freaks of prematurity which we have no means of connecting with the creative course of the evolution of our specialty.



and disguised, and mythical, and mystical substitute for the real experience of earlier men. The past as having been, and as having some sort of message for the present, had always, and especially since the Renaissance, brooded in and over the minds of European thinkers. It would not serve our purpose to review earlier phases of historical consciousness, except in certain summary characterizations.<sup>1</sup> We turn therefore to the early nineteenth century. In the present argument we shall select merely a few landmarks, and make them indicate as much as possible about the movements of which they are monuments. We make this selection too, not with reference to standards of value according to which professional historians appraise the particular items which we shall feature. We are selecting items which are common knowledge among the historians, but for reasons which do not necessarily give the items the same value in the reckoning of the historians which they have for the sociologists. The opposite aspect of the same problem is the task of suppressing details about the movements so marked, if they obscure the main meaning which we want to bring out. In attempting to solve this double problem, one is likely to represent the facts as much simpler than they were, and one can hardly avoid giving the impression that the whole meaning of the facts is less ambiguous and less involved than was actually the case.

The only way, therefore, to make a beginning of reporting the facts as they were is frankly to acknowledge that we can give attention only to certain outstanding actors in the scientific world, and that it is possible to indicate, by means of them, the general course of the nineteenth-century movement in social science in Germany only by dramatizing these selected actors, as agents of a larger proportion of impulsion than they actually exerted, in the movements in which they were influential. Along with this necessary exaggeration on the one hand, there must go an equally necessary abstraction from the whole mass of the actual activities. That is, we cannot

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wegele, *Geschichte der deutschen Historiographie seit dem Auftreten des Humanismus*, 1885.

speak of these landmark men as we could if we were writing their biographies. We must get our attention fixed on factors in their activities which have the largest and most immediate index value for the sociological purpose.

The move toward objectivity, then, was led by a galaxy of historians who came to be known as the "historical school."<sup>1</sup> That the representatives of the tendency applied this designation to themselves as early as 1815 is shown by Savigny's use of it in the first paper in his *Zeitschrift*.<sup>2</sup>

Of these men we shall confine ourselves to four, with merely incidental mention of others: (1) Friedrich Karl von Savigny, 1779-1861; (2) K. F. Eichhorn, 1781-1854; (3) B. G. Niebuhr, 1776-1831; (4) Leopold von Ranke, 1795-1886.<sup>3</sup>

As was intimated above, we shall not attempt to draw a symmetrical picture of either of these men. We shall not try to calculate the ratio of their merits in promoting social science as compared with one another or with different representatives of the same tendencies who might be selected. We shall not even try to decide what proportion that element of method which we shall connect especially with the name of each bears to the entire scheme of methodology which each exemplifies. The elements of procedure to which we shall call attention are notable factors in the molding of the methodology of all students of social science after the group here referred to had begun its work. We shall try to visualize these factors by connecting them respectively with one of these men.

To begin with, then, after 1800 the historians secured increased attention to the factor of *continuity* in human experience, and they

<sup>1</sup> See Wegele, *op. cit.*, p. 957.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I, No. I, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> The sketches of these men in *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie* are the most reliable as to facts, but not necessarily as to the special significance of the facts for sociologists. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, has brief sketches of all these, but the work bears the marks of third-hand compilation, more than of first-hand study. The brief sketches of each in the latest edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* are more trustworthy, and the bibliographies are sufficient to form bases for thorough study.

gave to that concept a richer content. We may use Savigny as symbolical of that contribution to social science in general. It is a mark of objectivity in social science to treat each object of attention as *an incident in a causal series of human experiences* reaching back into the impenetrable beginnings of the human career.

We do not now make the claim, and we shall not make the claim anywhere in this argument, that Savigny discovered this fact of continuity, or that he used it for all it is worth as a tool of investigation. Nor do we claim that Savigny gave to this relationship of continuity a prominence which at once promoted it to a permanent place or even to a very conscious place among the categories with which all responsible social science thereafter deliberately reckoned, or reckoned at full value.

On the other hand, because of Savigny and other historians this concept *continuity* thereafter became more and more distinctly a challenge to all social scientists to put a more exact content into the category, and to make more of the category as a vital factor in human affairs. The question, therefore, in time became insistent and more specific: *Just what kinds of nexus are there between antecedents and consequents in human experience?* What are the precise factors which bring it to pass that a given social group, say in 1810, is influenced by elements which affected other groups, say in 1710, or 1610, or any number of centuries earlier? Substantially this question was asked casually in so many ways, by so many different scholars, with reference to so many different situations; moreover, the answers ventured impressed more and more scholars as no answers at all, but as mere ways of covering up the difficulty of finding answers, that at last the sociologists deliberately took up the problem as a part of their distinctive division of labor. Without advertising it in just this form, the sociologists consciously proposed, one after another, beginning about 1880, to take up as a problem for solution, the *different types of causation* which are concerned in producing that continuity which links people with one another through generations and centuries and ages.

We pass from these preliminaries to the proper subject-matter of the section. The episode now to be described was not primarily an incident of scientific development. It was more a political struggle. The historical movement for which we choose Savigny as a symbol, and in which he was certainly a notable actor, would doubtless have occurred in the absence of such an incident. Savigny would probably have done his work as a historian of Roman law if he had not been stimulated by an impeachment of the importance of the Roman law for Germans. On the other hand, it is beyond doubt that the challenge which Savigny accepted intensified his interest in demonstrating the correctness of his opinions. In attempting to do so he did a life-work which, apart from the merits of this particular controversy, has left one of the most conspicuous monuments of that elementary factor in human experience which we have called *continuity*.

Anton Friedrich Justus Thibaut was a professor of law at Heidelberg. He was apparently not Savigny's equal in intellectual ability or in learning. He does not seem to have had the type of greatness of the idealist who is aware that his vision is for a far-off future, not for today, who nevertheless publishes his vision and bides his time. Thibaut's vision was actually realized as a consequence of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. He seems to have lacked the sense of humor which should have discerned that the desirable which he imagined could not be made practical politics at his time. As an *argumentum ad hominem*, directed at the Germans of 1814, Savigny's reply was convincing. The array of historical evidence of the persistence of Roman law in European society seemed to be decisive. In reality the facts about Roman law simply tended to prove that a social factor never ceases to be a social factor. They did not affect the companion principle that men in groups may merge their volitions so as to supersede the predominance of historical factors, and so either to nullify them or to relegate them to a subordinate rôle. We need not dwell upon this later preception here. We are concerned with the grade of European adolescence



in which the most impressive lesson taught and learned was the fact that any present social situation is linked by a never entirely broken chain of historical antecedents to a past that reaches back beyond discoverable beginnings.

The attitudes typified by these two antagonists are evident in the programs of leaders and parties wherever interests in things as they are come into collision with interests in modification.

In the pamphlet entitled *On the Necessity of a General Code for Germany*, which turned out to have lasting importance as a factor in developing social science, but which utterly failed of its immediate object, Thibaut spoke as follows:

. . . . In recent years [1814] the Germans have been awakened from a long sleep; all classes have served the good cause with an energy and concord which may be called almost unexampled, and our country has received an abundance of reasons for being convinced that the Germans are a noble, strenuous courageous folk which may make clear claim not merely to the justice but also to the gratitude of its rulers, and still more, that this splendid moment should be used for the purpose of destroying at last ancient abuses, and by means of new, wise civic arrangements, of securely establishing the prosperity of the individual. But precisely at this moment, and after the innumerable weaknesses of our former civic condition have long since been recognized by many of our first lawyers, precisely at this moment many people have nothing better to do than to set up again the tangled mixture of the old confusion in opposition to the more recently introduced law, with the decisive word of power that each small state should be organized as though it had no interconnection with the whole world, and as though it could trust its small separate powers to accomplish the incredible. Therewith theory has not been silent, and out of the mouth of a talented eminent author I have heard that it suffices if the Germans are led back to their old customs, and at most reserve for themselves here and there an improvement in particulars.

I am of the opinion, on the contrary, that our civic law (under which I have always understood the civil and criminal law and procedure) needs a complete revision, and that the Germans cannot be prosperous in their civic condition unless all the German governments, with united energy, seek to accomplish the composition of a code withdrawn from the arbitrariness of the separate governments, and issued for entire Germany.

Two demands may and must be made for all legislation: (1) that it should be formally and substantially complete, with its specifications presented

clearly, unambiguously and comprehensively; (2) that it should set in order the civic arrangements wisely and appropriately, in accordance with the needs of the subject. Unfortunately there is no single country in the German empire where a single one of these demands is half satisfied. . . . Accordingly our whole native law is an endless waste of mutually contradictory and destructive rules, wholly fitted to separate the Germans from one another and to make it impossible for judges and magistrates to reach a thorough knowledge of the law. But even complete knowledge of this chaotic miscellany does not lead far; for our whole native law is so incomplete and empty that, of a hundred legal questions, at least ninety must be decided from the adopted legal codes, the Canon and the Roman law. Precisely here, however, the anomaly reaches its highest culmination. The Canon law, so far as it does not apply to the Catholic church polity but affects other civic arrangements, is not worth mentioning. It is a mass of vague, fragmentary, incomplete regulations, in part occasioned by the defective views of the old interpreters of the Roman law, and so despotic in respect to the clerical power in world-affairs that no wise ruler can submit to the same. The last and chief source of law for us, consequently, is the Roman statute books; that is, the work of a nation which was very unlike us, and from the period of the lowest decline of the same; bearing the traces of this decline upon every page. One must be completely caught in passionate one-sidedness if one seriously rates the Germans as fortunate on account of the adoption of this ill-devised work, and recommends further retention of the same. . . .

It is undeniable, to be sure, that the introduction of the Roman law was in many ways a great stimulus to our scholarly tribe, especially to the study of philosophy and history, and that the whole mysterious mass gave much opportunity to the keenness and the correlating talents of the jurists, and will always furnish occasion for them to exercise and magnify themselves. But the citizen will always insist that he was not created for the jurist any more than for the teaching of surgery. He does not care to have anatomical experiments made upon his living body. All your learning, all your variations and conjectures have in a thousand ways disturbed the peaceful security of the citizen and merely filled the pockets of the attorneys. The prosperity of the citizen does not call for learned advocates, and we should have reason to thank heaven most profoundly if, through simple statutes, it were brought about that our attorneys might entirely dispense with lore; as we should have every reason to be jubilant if our physicians could mechanically heal all diseases with specific cure-alls. For true scientific activity there are always enough objects, so that we should never be under the necessity of tying knots in order later to untie them. We assert still further that at best learning has from the beginning not

animated the true juristic spirit for the civic body, but it has killed it. The mass of the positive and the historical is too enormous. The ordinary jurist, to whom after all the fortunes of the citizen are, as a rule, left, can at most grasp these masses conceptually. He can never elaborate them intellectually. Hence comes a woodenness and timidity which rouses pity; and at last there is always in the background an old comforter whence the necessary counsel is mechanically drawn. Simply compare the attorneys in England, where they bother themselves little about Roman antiquities and variants, with our much praised law-lovers. There all is life and virile selfness (*Eigenthümlichkeit*) while with us in most of the countries, everything is planted on wooden feet, and slides around so faintly and pedantically that it is hard to repress preference for the pettifoggers who know nothing of the positive and the learned but steer gaily out upon the open sea.

Taking all this together, the wish must impress itself upon every friend of the Fatherland that a simple code, the work of our own energy and activity appropriate to our civic conditions and to the needs of the peoples, may be established; and that a patriotic session of all German governments might promote for the whole realm the benefaction of such a civic constitution for all time. We will first attempt to make clear the advantages of this great innovation, and then to remove the objections which may be urged against its feasibility.

In the first place, for the sake of the scholar, to look at the matter from the scientific side: what an immeasurable gain it would be for the genuine higher culture of the servants of the law, the teachers and the learners! Thus far it has been impossible for anyone, even the most industrious theorist, to survey the whole law, and to understand it thoroughly. Everyone has at most his strong sides; at a thousand points night and darkness! A simple national code, worked out with German energy in the German spirit, will on the contrary be accessible in all its parts to even the mediocre mind, and our attorneys and judges will therein at last come into a situation in which, for each case, the law will be to them a living presence.

If now we turn to academic instruction, the gain is likewise immeasurable. Hitherto the law of particular regions, although highly important, has not been the object of thorough lectures in the academies. It could not be, and never will be, for our academies certainly remain, as is most warmly to be wished, *general* educational institutions for all Germany, and will never sink to the character of mere local institutions, where everything must grow mean under provinciality and pettiness. How shall a true zeal for the territorial law of a particular state under all circumstances ever arise, since the teachers in lectures on *general* law may always reckon upon a far larger public, especially in so far as they undertake authorship? Furthermore, every teacher of the better

sort will try to retain the golden outlook of finding a friendly reception somewhere else if his previous position becomes uncomfortable; that is, not to assume too much which might make freedom of transfer difficult. Accordingly black night has hitherto rested over particular law in the scientific respect, and the young practitioner was always obliged to find his way in it by his own effort. An unfortunate affair which seldom prospered; since the particular statutes are too scattered and numerous; and since very seldom as many as ten practitioners in one country have the good fortune of being able to bring together a complete collection of those statutes, the result has been, as a rule, that there were tremendous gaps in the conventional academic education. They can be filled out, to a certain degree, only by a variety of makeshifts. With a general code on the contrary, theory and practice would be brought into the most immediate connection, and the learned academic jurist would then be permitted to speak a word among the practitioners, while they now everywhere sway in the air with their common law.<sup>1</sup>

These extracts will be sufficient to indicate the substance of Thibaut's argument. The whole pamphlet, and even more Savigny's rejoinder, makes on the modern reader the impression that, in spite of Thibaut's hint above to the contrary, each of the debaters was deeply committed to the prejudice that law is first and foremost for the edification and convenience of lawyers, first teachers, then practitioners.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. 5 of Small's unpublished translation in the edition of 1840, from which the quotation was made. The original document occupies fifty-four pages. Seventy pages of reviews of the pamphlet with Thibaut's replies follow.

<sup>2</sup> The most instructive account of Thibaut's life is in *Allg. deutsch. Biog.*, title "Thibaut, A. F. J." Besides personal details the article is important for the whole study of the pros and cons of the "historical school" controversy, especially the citation of an article by Thibaut in *Archiv für civilistische Praxis* for 1838: "Ueber die sogenannte historische und nichthistorische Rechtsschule." The paper concludes that Savigny gained a literary victory, but that in substance Thibaut's triumph arrived with the adoption of the *Reichsgesetze* in the seventies.

In this section free use has been made of an unpublished study of Savigny by Dr. E. H. Sutherland. The "Preliminary Essay" (of forty-eight pages) by M. Wolowski, member of the Institute of France, translated as an introduction to Roscher's *Political Economy*, in 1857 contains a brief sketch of the Thibaut-Savigny Controversy with a particularly instructive note on pp. 15-17.



A biographical sketch of Savigny in *Preussische Jahrbücher*, IX (1862), 121, begins with the following:

In the year 1803 there appeared: *Das Recht des Besitzes, Eine civilistische Abhandlung von Dr. Friedrich Carl von Savigny*. There is scarcely another case on record of a reception equal to that which this maiden effort in periodical literature found. In place of all other voices we may quote the judgment which Thibaut expressed in the *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* of 1804 (No. 41). "It has been long since the reviewer has studied a legal treatise with such lively and ever growing interest as the work of genius [*geistvolles Werk*] before us. The author, who has already by this tentative work [*Versuch*] won the right to enter the ranks of our foremost civilists, combines in himself everything which is requisite for successful handling of the law—a rare, uniform alert insight, happy facility, and ease in comprehension and exposition of the most difficult conceptions, genuine, deeply penetrating learning, combined with thorough originality—in a word, everything which destiny rarely confers. The work consequently yields an enjoyment and a satisfaction seldom afforded by a legal treatise." The reviewer adds: "This judgment, by a man who, at the time already ranked without challenge as, along with Glück, Haubolt, and Hugo, among the foremost civilists, who in addition had in the previous year treated the same subject in a work of his own, shows what expectations were aroused by the first appearance of this author, who was at the time only twenty-four years old."

At the time of publication of Thibaut's argument, Savigny had been for four years a professor of law in the University of Berlin.<sup>1</sup>

In order to get Savigny's point of departure, we should recall some of the elements of the situation as they appeared to him. The official traditions of his parentage—Huguenot and German official class—his legal education and his own academic and official career would evidently predispose him to venerate the past. He consequently saw in any such proposition as Thibaut's, danger of a repetition of the Napoleonic methods and successes. This fear of the

<sup>1</sup> The best source of information about Savigny for our present purposes is the volume by Guthrie, *Conflict of Laws and the Limits of Their Operation in Respect to Time and Space*. It is a translation of the eighth volume of Savigny's *System des heutigen römischen Rechts* (1840-48). The Preface contains a translation of the Preface of the first volume of the same work. The Appendix contains a memoir on Savigny.

Napoleonizing of Germany (through general adoption of the Code Napoleon which had been grafted upon some of the minor states) and of a repetition of the disastrous attempts to impose arbitrarily new methods and institutions led him to conclude that the only safety was in stimulating veneration for the old traditional method, and in avoiding forcing processes. He found the older "natural rights" philosophy of jurisprudence dangerous to that method, and because of the suspected presence of leanings toward that older philosophy in Thibaut's plea, he attributed to it a great deal of the older philosophy; and the proposal of a code was judged on the merits of that philosophy. For example, a later writer, Rudorff (to whom Savigny left his MSS, and who is probably the best representative of Savigny's point of view) describes Thibaut's efforts in these words:

But he belonged to that philosophical school, fed on the theories of the eighteenth century, which believed that law can be produced of the desired quality and at the shortest notice on any soil. This belief was one offshoot of that extraordinary presumption, born of intellectual conceit and the pride of knowledge, which, in alliance with the maniacal strength of human misery, achieved such a mighty revolution in religion and politics, and which, having lost all respect for a past that seemed prolific only of abuses, imagined the present capable of realizing absolute perfection. It placed the end and goal of jurisprudence in the aim to give a mechanical guarantee for equity and justice, and it demanded in that spirit a common legislation for Germany.<sup>1</sup>

If we may judge simply by dispassionate reading of Thibaut's tract, Rudorff's indictment was a partisan exaggeration. To what extent Thibaut was committed to the "natural rights" philosophy does not appear. At all events the tract contains no support for the charge that the author believed "absolute perfection" to be within the reach of legislation. The insinuation that Thibaut was anxious to repeat the experiment of the French terrorists was on a par with the hysterics of the timid today who cry out that even the most temperate proposition to modify things as they are is bolshevism.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Guthrie, *op. cit.*, pp. 528-29.

In his immediate reply to Thibaut, and in his whole subsequent championship of legal traditionalism, Savigny made much of the alleged influence of the "natural rights" philosophy upon Thibaut and upon all who were of his way of thinking. This seems from this distance to have been special pleading in use of a "talking-point" which readily lent itself to the purpose; but it actually had very little to do with the substance of Thibaut's argument. "Natural rights" or no "natural rights," Thibaut believed that the Germans by taking thought and getting together might improve their legal conditions. Savigny thought they could not, and he did everything within the power of a resourceful debater to discredit the believers in improvement.

In his attitude, Savigny represented a large body of German scholars, whether a preponderance of German academic opinion it is impossible to say. Such men as Eichhorn and Niebuhr, for instance, of whom we shall have more to say later, were expressing similar views from other standpoints. Savigny carried the view over into jurisprudence, and under the stimulus of this specific argument developed *the historical method in jurisprudence*, and the implications of that method as they appeared to him.

To express his case in the most sympathetic way, he founded his whole social attitude upon his belief in the continuity of historical influences. The validity of this principle of social causation as a factor in human affairs by no means stands or falls with the validity or invalidity of Savigny's practical inference from it. His conclusion virtually amounted to the thesis that because influences propagate themselves from generation to generation, and from age to age, therefore, trust in the dynamic power of inertia is the cardinal principle of a sane civic program. The rudiments of social science as we hold it today would expose the fallacy of Savigny's reasoning. A beginner would demand whether *continuity* is the *only* component of group action. It would be a parallel of Savigny's reasoning to declare that *gravitation* constantly operates in the physical world; therefore it would be impossible to build a suspension bridge.

In spite of Savigny's unfortunate use of the principle of historical *continuity*, we repeat that there is no more conspicuous exponent of the principle itself. In an article in *Preussische Jahrbücher* for 1859 August Comte is introduced to the German public virtually for the first time (according to the writer of the article and also the editor). He is represented as claiming to have been the first to apply the idea of *continuity* to the interpretation of history. The writer thinks his claim might be good if he demanded credit for being *the first to apply it consistently to the whole field of history*. The writer insists that Herder (1744-1803) did a great deal with the idea, and that Hegel made further applications of it. As we have said, we are not claiming that Savigny *discovered* the idea of *continuity* in history. We have said in effect that there is no more convenient *representative* than he of the way in which the idea of continuity has stimulated closer approach to *objectivity* in the social sciences. He was certainly the first to carry out the idea on a great scale in exposition of a particular historical sequence, viz., the continuity of the influence of the Roman law from its origins down to the date of writing.

The situation which brought Thibaut and Savigny into collision was a phase of German conditions which had been changing its aspects ever since the beginnings of that disintegration of the old political régime to which the term Reformation more than ambiguously refers. That is, the name Germany had been a geographical label. The Germans had been a kaleidoscopic mixture of combining and dissolving, of conspiring and contending political groups. Each of these groups was the patrimony of a princeling who was the nucleus of opposition among his subjects to merging with other subjects. "Particularism" reigned, and nationalism was beyond the horizon of all but a few who did not count. The reversal of this situation is the main thread of German experience until the culmination in 1871 for which history gives Bismarck the lion's share of credit. Along with these petty localisms which made Germany politically feeble, and industrially backward, there was



the fear of the Napoleonizing of Germany. This fear was in the minds of believers both in particularism and in nationalism; yet it operated not to unite these factions, but to give both of them stimulus for their factionalism. Both particularists and nationalists accused the others of lending their influence to Napoleonism. Savigny and the historical school of jurisprudence, of which he was the leading spirit, virtually insisted upon particularism, resistance to unification of the legal institutions, as the radical defense against Napoleonism. Whatever Savigny and the historical school of jurisprudence did for social science, it was incidental or at least auxiliary to their obstructionary policy in politics. The "fear of the Terror" was the slogan by which Savigny and his kind rallied the forces of opposition to codification. Though at first Savigny was ostensibly dealing with the specific proposal of Thibaut, in reality he was opposing all proposals for legal reform by codification, and back of these proposals the "natural rights" philosophy, which he regarded as the arch villain really responsible for all contemporary efforts at social invention.

Savigny's first reply to Thibaut (till his death in 1861 he kept up the fight less directly) was in the pamphlet *Vom Beruf unserer Zeit für Gesetzgebung und Rechtswissenschaft*.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be noted that the monograph was written at a time when everyone in Germany who was capable of political judgments was roused to the highest pitch of feeling, whether he had distinctly formulated opinions or not. German national life was in the balance. At this exact year affairs had taken such a turn that it was once more possible for Germans to speak their minds freely about the relations of Germany with other countries, whatever might still have been the limitations upon freedom of speech about more strictly domestic questions.

It was in such a situation that the reputable teacher of law, Thibaut, published his proposal. His aim was to promote the unity

<sup>1</sup> "On the Vocation of Our Time in the Field of Legislation and Legal Science" (1814). References hereafter are to Small's unpublished translation.

of the Germans and at the same time to improve both the administration of justice and legal science in Germany. It was expected that the Vienna Congress (of 1814) would encourage the proposition. This being the case, Savigny felt moved to use his influence in estoppel. The consequence was the monograph now to be digested. In the Preface of the 1840 edition Savigny says that if it were to be written from his standpoint at that time its *manner* would be somewhat changed, but that his views were not materially altered, except to become more assured. The 1840 edition, he adds, "is therefore a completely unaltered reprint."

The introductory portions of the monograph show the effects of the factors to which we have referred. Thus Savigny says (p. 8):

In our time a completely unenlightened impulse of fabrication has appeared throughout all Europe. Sense of or sympathy with the greatness and peculiarity of other times, as well as with the natural development of peoples and constitutions, that is, with everything which might make history salutary and fruitful, has been lost. In its place has come an unenlightened expectation of the present time which people regard as destined to nothing less than the actual achievement of an absolute perfection. This impulse has exerted itself in all directions. . . . Everywhere new codes have been demanded, which through their perfection of legal administration, should furnish a mechanical security; since the judge, elevated above all private judgment, would be merely confined to literal application. At the same time these codes should hold themselves separate from all historical peculiarities, and they should, in pure abstraction, have equal applicability to all peoples and all times.

One wonders now that the *tu quoque* form of reply was not used more effectively in rejoinder to Savigny. He certainly appears at this distance to have been an extremist in the belief that Roman law was fitted to be used "in pure abstraction [with] equal applicability to all peoples and all times."

In order not to get beyond the depth of laymen not trained in Roman law we omit most of Savigny's argument on the legal side, and restrict ourselves to a summary of his plea on grounds of expediency. In a word, after formulating to his own satisfaction the argument that the very conception of a deliberate codification of the laws of a country flies in the face of the known principles according to which law comes into existence, Savigny concentrates his resis-

tance of Thibaut's agitation upon elaboration of substantially this assertion: *Supposing the idea of a German code were admissible as an abstract proposition, it is out of the question practically, because there is not sufficient legal learning or legal acumen in Germany to carry out such an undertaking.*

In the first place, according to Savigny, German lawyers lack the necessary basic *general culture* (trans., pp. 29 f.).

In the second place, the German *language* would not be a possible medium for such a code (trans., p. 33). (Yet at the same moment Savigny's colleague Hegel was finding the German language an adequate medium for expression of refinements of philosophical distinctions that had never been exceeded!)

Then Savigny supports his argument on general principles by exhibition in turn of the futilities of the following codes that had already been introduced in Europe: (1) The Code Napoleon (trans., p. 34); (2) The Prussian *Landrecht*, 1792-94 (trans., p. 43); (3) The Austrian Code, 1753 (trans., p. 49).

Having condemned these codes in turn on the ground of his appraisal of their experimental results, Savigny draws this conclusion (trans., p. 51):

. . . . If this judgment of the three modern codes is valid, it amounts to a confirmation of my view that the present time has no vocation [if he were writing now he would say "mandate"] to undertake a codification. Moreover the confirmation is very strong, for we have been called to notice over and over again how much the French are able to achieve by virtue of talent and facility in practical life. We know, moreover, how long certain deserving and penetrating men have worked with earnest zeal upon the German codes. Since then so little has been accomplished by means of such various efforts, there must be obstacles in the juristic culture of a whole period which cannot be overcome.

Savigny maneuvers Thibaut into the appearance of a dilemma between a perfect code on the one hand and acquiescence in things as they are on the other. This dilemma, however, is by no means a fair deduction from Thibaut's monograph. Thibaut was not arguing for a code that would be perfect for all times and in all cases. In fact, he provided for the prospective need of modifications to fit changes in conditions, and in accommodation to the circumstances

of different parts of Germany. For example, the inheritance laws might need to vary to suit different local customs. Savigny, however, draws the other conclusion from Thibaut and then demolishes the man of straw. As we have said, from our standpoint it seems wonderful that Thibaut and his followers did not immediately do more in the way of turning the charge back upon Savigny and the worshipers of the Roman law. The latter more obviously regarded that body of legal regulation as capable of furnishing deductions fit to govern all times and all people and all circumstances.

We may retrace our steps and review Savigny's general argument. He takes his position in his account of the origins of positive law. Thus (trans., pp. 12-13):

All law comes into being in the manner which prevalent, but not quite exact, idiom designates as the *law of custom*; that is, it is first produced by custom and popular faith, then through jurisprudence; *everywhere, that is, through internal, silently working forces, not through the arbitrariness of a lawgiver.*

Savigny treats this development of law as similar to the development of a language: i.e., it merely develops with the people, and is not imposed on them from the outside. "The law grows with the people; constructs itself in common with the people, and finally dies out when the people loses its peculiar character; the real setting of the law is the common consciousness of the people."

If Thibaut had been a modern sociologist he might have replied after this fashion:

Granted; but what is your conception of the actual operation of getting custom into legal and popular consciousness as recognized law? Did not someone, somewhere, sometime have to do at least piecemeal what I am now asking the Germans to do, viz., get competent legal minds together, take account of stock of effective rules of custom, write off to profit and loss those traditions which are no longer respected, and thus settle on an understood basis for future procedure? Ergo. I am not asking for violence to previous procedure, but for continuance of it; instead of assumption that it was foreordained to stop just before we came upon the stage of action.

Like so many other men who have talked about historical processes—Herbert Spencer a flagrant instance—Savigny had the



cast of mind which pictures a continuous process in past times, but cannot adjust itself to recognition of the same process when it emerges in its own time. When dealing with the importunate question, What can Germany do to better the civic situation which all intelligent men deplore? Savigny answered:

As to the purpose in view we are at one. We want a basis of reliable law, secure against assault from arbitrariness and unjust purpose. We want, also, community of the nation and concentration of its scientific endeavors upon the same object. For this purpose they demand a code. . . . I see the proper means for our end in an organically progressing legal science which may be common to the whole nation. . . . It is necessary to understand better the principles and basis of the laws to get at the roots of the laws by historical study. This does not mean the exclusive praise of the Roman law; also not a demand for the unconditional retention of any given legal rule whatever. . . . The method rather consists in following every given legal rule to its roots, and thus of discovering its organic principle, by which means that which is still vital has now its place in history [trans., p. 56].

According to Savigny this can be done only by a study of the Roman law.

If we give Savigny the benefit of the most favorable interpretation of his position, his contention amounts to a demand that systematic legal codification shall be attempted only by a generation adequately grounded in understanding of the Roman law. While we might accept this demand, with some qualifications, as a cautious counsel of perfection, it had the effect of supporting inhibition of all more direct attempts to introduce new legislation. His refrain was, "It must grow!" This was *laissez faire* applied to legislation.

#### THE HISTORICAL SCHOOL OF JURISPRUDENCE

Herewith the stage was set for the beginnings of the "historical school of jurisprudence," a development of concern not to lawyers alone, but of first-rate importance to historians, and not less vital to the evolution of social science in general.

Savigny's own account of the theory on which the historical school of jurisprudence was founded, should be read carefully at

this point. It is contained in the Preface of the first volume of his *System des heutigen römischen Rechts*. It is translated by Guthrie, and used as an introduction to the book already cited: *Savigny, A Treatise on the Conflict of Laws*. The translator, who was a Scotch lawyer, says: "The part which Savigny bore in the controversies of the last generation, and his position as the head of 'the historical school of jurisprudence,' occasioned misapprehensions which he endeavored to remove by the eloquent preface to his first volume. This preface is the best introduction to the study of the great jurist."

The movement to which the name "historical school" belongs at once created an organ—the journal entitled *Zeitschrift für geschichtliche Rechtswissenschaft*. We may quote from it by way of exemplifying the spirit of the movement. One of the variations of the main thesis of the school was in the formula: "There is nothing completely isolated and separate in human existence, but everything must be considered as a member of a larger whole, from which it developed, and the understanding of which is essential to the understanding of the particular" (p. 442).

If, without previous hint of its origin, anyone familiar with American sociology were asked to locate this sentence, he would have little doubt that it was written in the United States since 1883. It was a large part of the substance of American sociologists' argument for several decades. This sentence alone would be enough to impeach the presupposition of early American sociologists that they were originators of radically new ideas. On the contrary, every fundamental idea which the American sociologists mobilized in the earlier period had been promulgated generations and sometimes centuries before, but had not attracted attention enough to become a variant of traditional method in social science.

The thesis quoted leads to the principle:

The substance [*Stoff*] of the law is given by the entire past of the nation, but not arbitrarily, so that it might have been this or that; rather has it proceeded from the inner nature of the nation and from its history. The problem

of jurisprudence, consequently, is to trace the history of the law in force among us back to its origin, in order to grasp the core of our law conditions, which is possible only in this way.<sup>1</sup>

This idea is stated explicitly by Savigny in his reply to Gönner, who had attacked the historical school, in the first number of the *Zeits. für gesch. Rechtswis.* (quoted by Laboulaye, *Historie du Droit de Propriété*, p. 28).

The basis of the entire historical system is the tracing of this common element through all its transformations until its origin is reached, the origin which comes to it from the character of the nation, of its destiny, and its needs. This anterior element is not a dead letter, as it seems to the opposing school, a fact accomplished, whose persistence is stated without comprehension of the reason. It is living. It is one of the forces, one of the modes of activity of the nation. [These sentences are quite in the sociological idiom of 1923!] The general principle of the historical doctrine is that in every state, and especially in regard to its civil law, a people is not an accidental individuality, but an individuality which is essential, necessary, controlled by its entire past; that consequently the search for a common law is as foolish as the search for a general language which will replace all the actual and living languages. This does not mean, however, that this school does not recognize in humanity certain uniform tendencies, which may be called the philosophical element of all positive law.

In the Preface to the first number of his journal, Savigny gives a more extended discussion of the historical school, from which the following:

By considering closely the different systems which have reigned successively in jurisprudence, it is easy to see that the differences may be reduced to two classes; and the jurisconsults are allied to two principal schools, between which the difference is fundamental, the interior differences within each being only apparent and easily reconciled by unimportant concessions.

The first of these schools has for a long time been called the historical school. For the second, on the contrary, it has been almost impossible to find a positive appellation, since, in truth, it is only the negation of the historical school, and besides is presented in the most diverse and contradictory forms, sometimes in the name of philosophy and natural law, sometimes as the common sense of humanity. For lack of a better name, let us call it the non-historical school.

<sup>1</sup> *Allg. deutsch. Biog.*, title "Savigny."

The absolute opposition between these two methods of considering law cannot be completely understood as long as one limits oneself to considering it in the schools of jurisconsults. It is necessary to carry the study farther, since this opposition is in fact of a general nature. It is found more or less at the basis of every human affair, especially in questions which concern the constitution and administration of states.

Here is the general problem: What is the influence of the past on the present? What is the connection of that which is with that which will be?

And with regard to that some will tell you that each generation, free and independent in its sphere, lives happily and brilliantly, or unhappily and obscurely, in accordance with the measure of its ideas or its forces. In that system the study of the past is not absolutely disdained, since the past tells us what have been the results of their conduct for our ancestors. History is thus a kind of morality and politics in examples; but after all it is only one of those studies of the kind which may easily be dispensed with.

In the other system there is, from the point of view of human existence, nothing absolutely individual or independent. Rather, that which we regard as an individual when seen from nearby, will be nothing more than a part of a larger whole. Thus every human individual is necessarily presented to our thought as a member of a family, of a people or of a state; each age of a nation as the continuation and development of all past ages. Every other method of seeing it is incomplete, and by itself is false and pernicious.

The last of these paragraphs are sociology quite up to date. It was in the world and in explicit expression at least two generations before the American sociologists. They and their European contemporaries, or some of them, revived and recommissioned the essence of it after it had elsewhere fallen into neglect.

Savigny continues:

If this is true, each age does not act arbitrarily and in an egoistic independence, but is entirely [*sic*] held to the past by common and indissoluble bonds. Each epoch then ought to admit certain previous elements, which are necessary and at the same time voluntary; necessary in the sense that they do not depend on the will and arbitrariness of the present; voluntary in the sense that they are not imposed by an outside will (such as that of the master in regard to his slaves) but that they are given by the very nature of the nation considered as a whole which subsists and maintains itself in the midst of its successive developments. The nation of today is only a member of this perpetual nation.



It wills and acts in this body, and with this body, so that it can be said that whatever is imposed by the body is at the same time freely accomplished by the member.

The foregoing paragraph is not sociology quite up to date. This fact might be made into a leading illustration of the function which sociology has performed and is destined to perform now that it has ceased to be predominantly introspection of itself, and has become interpretation of group processes. That is, it does not and cannot perform all the operations involved in comprehension of human experience. It does and can take up observation of human experience at points where other methods of inspection have ceased to function, and it carries on a function which contributes toward complete interpretation of the experience.

Savigny adds the confident valuation: "In this system history is not only a morality in examples, but it is the only way which will lead us to the true knowledge of our own state."

This proposition is a symptom of the attitude to which we alluded in the introduction, viz.: Soon after 1800 leading European scholars were moved by the conviction that the chief scripture given for our instruction in the conduct of life is human experience.

Still further Savigny:

There was a time when the separation of the individual from his past was vigorously pursued, and with great confidence. The desire was not only to isolate the present from the disdained past, but also to render the citizen independent of the state. Disastrous experience in regard to this latter attempt made it known how dangerous and criminal it was; and whatever sentiments one might carry hidden in his heart he would not dare present a similar theory today. But it is quite different in regard to the independence of the present from the past, a conception which has a large number of daring and confident partisans, in spite of the inconsistency which admits at one point that which it rejects at another. The reason for the persistence of this historic egoism, if I may be permitted to use the name, is that many persons, without knowing it, take their ideas about the course of the world for the course of the world itself. For these persons, unless they are aware of this illusion, the world began with them and their thoughts.

If we apply to jurisprudence this difference of opinions it will not be difficult to define the character of the two schools of which we have been speaking.

The historical school holds that the substance of the law has been given entirely [*sic!*] by the past of the nation; that it is not arbitrary, so that it could be this or that institution, but it is the result of the intimate nature of the nation and of its history. The basis of the activity of the epoch is examination of this fatefully given course, to revive and renew it in its freshness. The other school on the contrary, holds that at each instant the law is the arbitrary result of the will of the legislator, independent of anterior law, and accommodated to the demands and uses of the moment. If the law is not at the moment given, reconstituted entirely, quite new, quite independent of the ancient law, it is a concession of the legislators, who permit the ancient ideas to persist; and this tolerance is their only merit and virtue.

How decided is the difference between these schools! This is easily perceived if one is willing to reflect on the application of these two theories. The functions of the legislator, of the judge and of the entire scientific study of law differ completely in the two systems.

Again, in the third volume of his journal, in an article entitled "Stimmen für und wider neue Gesetzbücher," Savigny says: "The human body is not unchangeable, but is incessantly growing and developing. So I regard the law of each nation as a member of its body, not as a garment merely that has been made to please the fancy and can be taken off at pleasure and exchanged for another." He found the source of the whole agitation for codes, which he called "the attempt to rectify the law from above and at one stroke," in the tendency of the time "*alles zu regieren und immer mehr regieren zu wollen.*"

In later life, in answering some of the charges made against his school, Savigny modified his statements of theory, though he remained unchanged as to essentials. Doubtless his experiences during his political career, before he became minister of legislation (1842), in discovering that legislation does not grow, in the sense which he vaguely presupposed, but is the result of continual conflict and compromise, had something to do with the modifications.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a summary of the characteristics of the historical school, see Dean Roscoe Pound, *Harvard Law Review* (June, 1911), pp. 599-600.

We come then to the chief monument of the connection between Savigny and the entire codification controversy, on the one hand, and the methodology of social science, primarily of legal history, at one remove of history in general, and ultimately of all social science, notably of the new division sociology. This was Savigny's monumental work, *The History of the Roman Law in the Middle Ages* (6 vols., 1815-31; 2d ed., 7 vols., 1834-51).

The history is a definite attempt to substantiate Savigny's position in the controversy over codification. His thesis is *that the Roman law was not destroyed even by such an upheaval as the barbarian invasion, but that the laws lived on in the customs and laws of the people, and spread in that form over Europe*. His purpose was to collect evidences of such survival. The thesis itself is a specific instance of the doctrine of the historical school that laws are not imposed from without, but that they develop like a language from within. The past determines the future law. This is the principle to which we have given the name *continuity*.

It does not fall within the scope of our argument to answer the question: To what extent and in what sense, if at all, did Savigny establish his thesis? That is primarily a matter for the legal historians. Nor does it affect our argument in the least to discover that Savigny's conception of the implications carried by the fact of the continuity of a given historical factor would not bear strict sociological analysis. The important matter is that Savigny and the historical school put such emphasis upon the fact of *survival* or *continuity* of historical causation that it thenceforth became an element which demanded a share of consideration in every social science problem. Whether the situation is that of a child in the juvenile court, or of a congress of nations, it is dealt with superficially and irresponsibly unless a part of its treatment consists of attempts to answer the question: How much of the past, in what forms, combinations, and proportions, operates in the given case?

We cannot follow in detail the ramifications of this idea as it gripped the minds not only of historians but increasingly of all social

scientists. We simply restate the facts in this way: Henceforth it became more and more commonplace among scholars to assume that at every stage human life is a function of human life at previous stages. The immediate implication of such a commonplace is the necessity of finding interpretations of each social situation (whether in whole or in part is a later matter) in terms of the previous situations by which it was conditioned.

Expressed in another way, from 1814 the historians, and with them social scientists in general, had possession of a clue to the mystery of the scheme of things human, which was comparable with Darwin's generalization, nearly a half-century later, of the scheme of things physical. In their own way the historians had arrived at perception of a fact to which they might have given the name *evolution*. They did not give it a distinctive name; but from 1814 on, they more and more emphasized the relationship which we have called *continuity*; and their example taught other social scientists the same emphasis. Little by little the conclusion gathered the force of demonstration in social science that, whatever may prove to be more particular principles of human relationships, *gradualism* rather than *catastrophism* is the universal manner of social cause and effect. Indeed, it might be a gain for both physical and social science if it were agreed to retire the word *evolution* altogether, because such clouds have gathered around it, through confusion of the essential matter with Darwin's particular hypothesis as to the law of that essential; and if it were agreed to indicate the reality common to physical and social causation by the uncompromised term *gradualism*.



### CHAPTER III

#### EICHHORN (1781-1854) AND THE MULTIPLICITY OF FACTORS, OR COMPLEXITY

Before passing to the next factor to be mentioned in the historical series, it is in order to repeat the main thesis of this part of the argument, viz.: The awakening of the critical spirit among the historians meant something more than new emphasis by the historians upon objectivity in the sort of knowledge to which they were chiefly devoted. It meant that all kinds of social science which had to deal with past situations in human experience were bound to learn from the historians all that they had discovered about what constitutes historical conclusiveness. The outstanding lesson for which Savigny is the most obvious representative is that human beings and institutions cannot be understood unless they can be connected up with all their antecedents. These antecedents not only survive in the persons and institutions which succeed in later generations; but these antecedents, if they can be visualized in their simplicity, if they can be considered in detachment from accumulating complications and from obscuring variations, actually often exhibit the essential reality of a given personal or institutional type better than it can be discerned in contemporary types.

For example, there are phases of English law and custom with reference to the relations between husband and wife that would be unintelligible unless they could be traced back to the antecedent conditions in which the husband was frankly regarded as the guardian of his wife, and the wife was frankly regarded, by herself as well as by the law, as an inferior order of being, as morally an infant, like her minor children. These stages in the conception of relations between husband and wife are in their turn unintelligible until we have probed back still farther to times reflected by the Roman legal

rule of *patria potestas*, i.e., when the husband was lawful owner of wife and children, with power of life and death over them. So of the entire network of social phenomena in a given period. In one of the phases of objectivity, they have to be known in their historical connections.

When we have assimilated so much in the way of social sophistication, we have after all learned only the first letter of the alphabet of social objectivity. It turns out that from this beginning the path toward the completest possible knowledge, even in its historical aspects alone, leads through mazes of exploration of how much more is involved in historical objectivity.

In this course we are merely scratching the surface of this subject, in pursuit of our immediate purpose of pointing out that the introduction to objective knowledge of those relations upon which the sociologists are learning to specialize was in many elementary ways the work of older types of social scientists—the emphasis just now being upon the historians. With Savigny as symbol of the facts, we have specified that the facts and the implications of the reality of *continuity* in human affairs had to become a dependable factor in scientific consciousness before social science could reach its adolescence.

The main thesis is now to be repeated in terms of another phase of historical objectivity which for convenience may be named *multiplicity* or *complexity*. Eichhorn is selected to represent this principle. He never used any German equivalent for our terms “multiplicity” and “complexity” as a technical designation for his method. He worked out wide reaches of *the fact*, to which we have applied the terms.

It will not be necessary to give as much time to this second illustration as to the first. The most pertinent items may be compressed into a brief exhibit, viz.: In 1808 Eichhorn was professor of German law, a friend and colleague of Savigny, at the University of Berlin. In that year he published the first volume of the work which has since loomed up as one of the landmarks of progress in

historical conception: *Deutsche Staats- und Rechts Geschichte* (*German Constitutional and Legal History*).<sup>1</sup>

In the first place, Eichhorn deserves to rank, at least up to the time when Ranke was at the height of his influence, as the foremost, if not literally the first agitator for recovery of the sources of early German history. He seems to have been the most impressive witness to the necessity of gathering authentic sources, instead of resting content with hearsay. Niebuhr followed with the beginnings of a technique for winnowing the sources. The idea of the importance of gathering sources, not only for ancient history, but for later times, does not appear to have been urged with both intelligence and force before Eichhorn.

In the second place, no one before Eichhorn outlined a respectable survey of the interacting social conditions in central Europe, among which constitutional and legal development took shape. In this respect he was certainly a path breaker; and modern treatment of the history of German institutions has never outgrown his influence. English constitutional history bears marks of the same mold.

In the third place, while Eichhorn was setting an example in trying to tell the story of German legal history more objectively by presenting it in its connection with German political history, he was drawn into presenting much more than had previously been included in legal and political history. In the course of the work, he wove into the exhibit, at different stages, types of factors which were far from merely legal or constitutional. Indeed, before he was through he had ranged alongside of legal and political elements so many other elements which he found on different occasions to have been related to the legal and the political, that, whether by intention or not, in effect he had presented a sort of outline scheme of what has since been known as "social history." That is, he had

<sup>1</sup> The first use that I have traced of a phrase which later became one of the most frequent and significant idioms of German historical scholars, was in the Preface of Vol. IV of this work, p. 5. viz., *quellenmässig und wahr*.

given an impulse to the idea, which was later developed by some of the sociologists, that the history of human society must be made out, before there can be completely veracious history of any selected aspect or factor or element of human society. In fact, Eichhorn blazed a path through German history, which was improved upon by other explorers, until the developing conception of what a history ought to be was illustrated in England, for example, in a far more advanced way by Green's *History of the English People*. Eichhorn began to realize the conception which might be formulated in this way: *An objective history must be an account of all the different influences which entered into the life of a people, of the ways in which these influences worked, and of the relative effect which each from time to time had upon the total conditions of that people.*

We do not claim that Eichhorn ever reduced his method to a categorical formula of this sort. We find nothing quite as explicit in his own writings. We claim, however, that his work set an example of historical procedure which was followed into such implications that presently the content of our formula was among the methodological presumptions of European scholars. Today something equivalent to this formula is a commonplace not only with historians, but with all other social scientists. It is what we mean in this connection by the catch phrase *complexity or multiplicity*. We use the name of Eichhorn as symbolical of the adoption of this conception into the methodology of all social science.

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With the Table of Contents before us, the statement will be easily understood that this outline of German history was the matrix in

which all later attempts to recapitulate German experience have been shaped.<sup>1</sup>

If Bismarck had lived in 1808, and if he had then cherished the purposes which he formed and realized as prime minister of Prussia, he could not have taken a wiser step toward the measure of success which rewarded his life-work in 1871 than to engage someone to do just what Eichhorn did. As we have seen, and as many people at the time realized, one of the cardinal problems for the Germans was incidental to the fact that they had no sense of Germany as a country, nor of Germans as compatriots. They were Westphalians and Hanoverians and Prussians and Saxons and Bavarians and Austrians, and so on and so on through the paltry catalogue. To be anything effective in the way of making the most of themselves as a people, and among the peoples of the earth, a national self-consciousness was necessary. Generations which did not know their antecedents needed to be made acquainted with their predeces-

<sup>1</sup> Even from this scheme of titles sufficient indications may be gathered that a conception of the lateral relations of human facts was here in course of incubation, and that it had no visible limitations short of the entire range of human life-interests. In Savigny's two monumental works, for example (*Das römische Recht im Mittelalter* and *System des heutigen römischen Rechts*), law conceived as a self-sufficient structure stands forth almost as sole and stark and spectral as the steel skeleton before clothed with the outer coating of a modern skyscraper. In Eichhorn one begins to feel the breath of the life of the society within which laws were merely incidental functions. Thus, in the Table of Contents (we use the page numbers for reference) after giving prominence in each division to the necessity of finding the pertinent evidence, and after indicating the sources of the same—a consideration which before 1800 it had been easy for pseudo-scholarship to satisfy without great pains—he calls attention to such co-operating factors as differentiated social groupings, instead of supposed exhaustive classification under the categories of rulers and ruled (60-95); varieties of conflict groups (96-160); relation of state to church (217-20); glimpses of internal reconstruction processes, in place of static interpretation (524-36); growth as opposed to status in both state and church, (537-84); merging of the old order with the new feudalism, (585-604); social surveys of Europe (888-1056); (II, 1-83, and 1056-1272); (II, 84-190); an evaluation of feudalism, (II, 336-64); the universities as civic factors (III, 356-62); social reasons for defects of civic law (to be considered in connection with the Thibaut-Savigny issue) (III, 389-94); evaluation of the papal system (III, 504-46); evaluation of church teaching and worship (III, 547-51); social survey of Europe 1517-1815 (bulk of the fourth volume).



sors. A race palsied by its own schisms needed to be told of the time when it was one and powerful. Peoples one in blood, in language, in social heritage, in essentials of religion obscured under differences of administration, and also one in economic destiny, needed to be made aware of their community of interests by rediscovery of their common past. Not that this factor alone could be decisive, if the unity of the past was not essentially in harmony with interests of the present. It would have been impossible to revive a national consciousness which circumstances had meanwhile made obsolete. In this case the correlating nervous centers had ceased to function. Every action by any state of Germany was as a rule an arrest or disturbance of the normal actions of its neighbors, and the aggregate of these uncorrelated actions was cumulative misfortune for the whole mass. Divided Germany and divided Germans needed again to become conscious of collective Germany and collective Germans. German sanity and health and strength depended upon reawakening or creation of a sense of connections with the German past and of interdependence with all the Germans in the present. This reorganization of consciousness, as a preliminary to reorganization of co-operation for the common weal, could not be accomplished at a stroke. It could not be achieved by a single agency. The time factor and many converging influences were indispensable. Among these, however, a strong sense of national continuity and community was elemental. No single historian could produce this influence; but Bismarck himself is inconceivable if he had not been built out of the material which recovery of the German past had assembled for the making of new Germans. No outstanding great characters could have welded the Germans into a single people if this tardily awakened historical consciousness had not animated many lesser leaders and had not penetrated the masses in a strong degree. While we trace certain elements of historical methodology to other men, the great merit of Eichhorn is that he first unfolded to modern Germans a convincing panorama of their national oneness in variety, and thereby

furnished an essential support to the struggle in the nineteenth century to avert from the Germans the fate which had overtaken the Poles.

With the materials at command it is impossible to reach a credible conclusion about the kind and degree of premonition of all this which stimulated Eichhorn to his work. How much he may have builded better than he knew, we cannot discover. We are simply celebrating this functional value of Eichhorn's beginnings and of continuations in the same line.

Eichhorn has a distinct meaning for the sociologists beyond that which primarily concerns historians. As we look back from our present point of view, we see that Eichhorn was not merely school-mastering the world into appreciation of accurate and thorough use of historical sources, as evidence of what had occurred. He was also beginning a line-upon-line process of revealing that, in order to tell what has occurred, it is necessary to tell more different kinds of things than may be of primary interest to any single type of writer or reader.

It had been the well-nigh invariable custom, from the beginning of historical writing, for the historians to be mouthpieces for the interests represented by either rulers, or warriors, or lawyers, or priests. These writers had, accordingly, as a rule, set down merely those groups and series of occurrences which attracted their attention from the standpoint of the respective group interests. Now comes Eichhorn with a partial proclamation of the message which the sociologists have later tried to expand and publish, viz.: You cannot tell all that was true about the things that chiefly interest rulers, or warriors, or lawyers, or priests without telling at the same time many other things of primary interest to many other sorts and conditions of men; and without telling also how these different kinds of occurrences reciprocally conditioned one another. Eichhorn did not, to be sure, carry out this proclamation very much into detail. We may, indeed, pack his central message into this summary: *Laws do not exist in a vacuum. They are bone of bone and*

*flesh of flesh in the whole life of their time and place.* He did not specify beyond rather obvious particulars, but the whole that we have later surveyed more fully, corresponding with our convenience—terms “multiplicity” and “complexity,” was implicit in what he discovered. Later social science, down to and including sociology, has been, in one section, busy elaboration of the discovery which Eichhorn revealed in principle.<sup>1</sup>

At this distance it is hard to realize that there ever was a time when this factor *complexity* was not as safely matter-of-course as it is with us. Without considerable acquaintance with eighteenth-century literature, the contrast can hardly become as vivid in our understanding as it is in fact. Nor is it possible to name all the channels through which this preconception has been conveyed to our consciousness. In recent social science teaching it has been so elemental that mention of it perhaps affects the present generation as a triviality. Yet this commonplace was achieved at countless cost, and it was mediated to our minds by innumerable expositors. It made such an impression on certain minds in the latter part of the nineteenth century that it operated with them as an effective impulse to the differentiation of sociology. As to the specific connection between Eichhorn and this influence, it must be said that it would be impossible to name a respectable treatise written in the latest fifty years upon civilization in Europe in which traces of Eichhorn's influence are not evident. For example, during the 1870's Professor J. L. Diman was at the height of his influence at Brown University. When the present writer began his apprenticeship as a teacher of history in 1881, he had the use of very full notes of Professor Diman's course in 1875-76 on General European History. He discovered that the treatment was very evidently modeled upon Eichhorn, and some of the most effective passages were quotations from, or amplifications of, that author. No single book has probably served more Americans as a guide to European history than

<sup>1</sup> For the orthodox German estimate of Eichhorn's work, see Frensdorff in *Allg. deutsch. Biog.*, p. 478.

Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire*. It cannot be doubted that the original conception of that book would hardly have been formed if the prospectings which made it possible had not been carried out as we find them in Eichhorn.

In spite of all the foregoing, it must be confessed that if we were sketching the antecedents of sociology in the developing social science of all Europe rather than in the particular line of influence which is so easily made out between the Germans and the Americans, we should not have chosen Eichhorn as our symbol of this particular factor *complexity*. Among German scholars he is the most obvious choice. Among European scholars in general Eichhorn is overshadowed by Guizot (*History of Civilization in Europe, and History of Civilization in France*, 1828-29). We quote, without comment, the judgment of Robert Flint:

He [Guizot] was the first to dissect a society in that same comprehensive, impartial and thorough way in which an anatomist dissects the body of an animal, and the first to study the functions of the social organism. Before him there had been a vast amount both of historical research and historical speculation; stages, ages, classes, individuals, had had their histories, some of which were excellent; the development of laws, manners, sciences, arts, letters, had been traced, and in some cases not only learnedly but with considerable insight into causation; and there had even been systems not a few as to the course, and plan, and laws of history as a whole; yet he was fully entitled, I think, to speak of the work he accomplished as new. It was not conceived before the eighteenth century. It was first truly commenced by himself. And what a noble commencement he made! Of course, in a work so extensive, so difficult, every careful student must find something to criticise, something to dissent from; yet hardly one will deny that it is a model of scientific skill, comprehensively treating of all the vast variety of facts included in civilization, while never allowing to drop out of sight the unity of life which underlies the multiplied manifestations; that it is not only wonderfully true and satisfactory as an organic whole, but that it has illuminated a multitude of particular points and dispelled a multitude of serious errors; that it disclosed in every order of social phenomena a significance unnoticed before, by the manner in which it showed them in a constant contact with the other orders of phenomena.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of History in France and Germany* (1st ed., 1874), p. 240.

Again it is common knowledge among social scientists that Guizot and his successors in France bulked large among the influences that developed historical conceptions. It is beyond doubt that this factor entered appreciably into stimulation of the sociological movement, but no one has taken the trouble to prove it. Among the men now working for their Doctor's degrees in American universities, there ought to be some who would devote themselves to collection of material for a history of historical instruction in American universities, especially since the seventies. Among the older men who were students during the inauguration of the modern type of historical study especially in the 1870's, recollections doubtless survive of the European preceptors to whom American teachers referred with most respect; and there should be enough clues of this sort to show specific cases of sequence between the factors which we are discussing, besides other series of influences which we are not discussing, and their effects in American social science.



## CHAPTER IV

### NIEBUHR (1776-1831) AND SCRUTINY OF EVIDENCE: EARLY ROMAN HISTORY

In the two foregoing sections we have recalled cardinal contributions to conceptions of the essential content of human experience. We pass now to a series of contributions primarily to the methodology or technique of the sciences, in the first instance history, concerned with the interpretation of human experience. In the illustrative list of general ideas which we have scheduled as parts of the building material of social science at large and of sociology in particular,<sup>1</sup> the next in order is *necessity of subjecting alleged historical evidence to the severest scrutiny*. Today this is supposed to go without saying with everyone who has had the rudiments of historical training. In the early years of the nineteenth century it was a principle more generally "honored in the breach than in the observance." We select Niebuhr as representative of the effective mobilization of this principle in German historical methodology.

As an index of the prestige of Niebuhr among German scholars, a quotation from Wegele is in order:

Yet B. G. Niebuhr counts as the real reformer of our historiography. To come into his presence means a quicker beating of the heart. To bring him back to the recollection of the nation in an adequate degree may well be regarded as the enviable task of an author. We have here to do with a man of most extraordinary mind as well as character. It seems as if he was from birth and by nature destined to the career of a scholar. He himself believed this. His fortunes placed him at an unusually early age in public life and activities of statesmanship, which proved to be the best preparatory school for the developing historian. He was born August 22, 1776, at Copenhagen. He grew up in the district of Dithmarsch under the eyes of a talented father, who had made for himself a respected name by his travels in Arabia and his expert

<sup>1</sup> See Small, title "Sociology," *Encyc. Amer.*

descriptions of the same. Very early the son, by his exceptional abilities, as well as by his unusual facility of comprehension, raised the extraordinary hopes which he later fulfilled. In a very large degree he was self-taught, and he was tireless in self-instruction. He early gave his attention and interest to languages, history, and politics. In November, 1804 he wrote: "If my name is mentioned hereafter, I shall be known to men as historian and political author, as antiquarian and philologist." [Age of 15.] After a stay of two years at the University of Kiel, he entered in 1806 the service of the Danish Minister of Finance, as private secretary, and was thus introduced into an excellent school of politics and financial science. At the same time, he did not permit himself to be made unfaithful to his favorite studies of Greek and Roman antiquities by the noises of the great world and his official duties: and no one who came into the vicinity of the youth of 21 years failed to recognize in him certain extraordinary characteristics. In the year 1808 he undertook for his further education a trip to England and Scotland. He there gained impressions which were productive during his whole subsequent life. At the same time they confirmed him on the one side in his Germanistic, on the other side in his anti-revolutionary temper. The French Revolution had made upon him more a terrifying than an ingratiating impression. . . . Returning to Copenhagen, he was at once [1809], at the age of 21, advanced to the position of a director of the Bank and of the East India Company. For various reasons he preferred to accept, two years later, a directorship in the Prussian Bank and the *Seehandlung*. Freiherr vom Stein, who was at that time head of the Prussian Ministry of Finance, was the one whose attention was called to Niebuhr. Shortly after the great catastrophe befell the Prussian state [Jena, 1806]. It did not shake Niebuhr's faith in the future of the system developed by Frederick the Great. He gave himself loyally to the work of restoration. Only after it appeared to him impossible to work with success for his new fatherland did he withdraw from official cooperation in civic affairs and return to his studies. In these years he delivered at the University of Berlin those lectures on Roman History from which his celebrated work was developed. In the preface to the first volume of the first edition he says: "It was a time in which we experienced the unheard-of and the unbelievable; a time which drew attention to many forgotten and obsolete institutions by their collapse. And our souls were strengthened by the dangers which it was our duty to avert, as by the vastly enhanced devotion to fatherland and ruler." The opening War of Liberation summoned Niebuhr again to affairs. The transactions which accompanied the restoration of a new Germany and Prussia he followed with lively interest. Well known is the monograph in which, with energetic emphasis, he argued for the claims of Prussia to all Saxony, in the name of the German nation and

its interests. The position in the Prussian service which he now desired, and from which alone, as he thought, he could work with success for the state, was not at the time within his reach. His intense conservatism, which however did not in principle exclude belief in advances toward constitutionalism, appears among other things to have stood in his way. By many, however, his situation was regarded as a sort of honorable banishment when [1816] he was sent as Prussian ambassador to the Vatican. He was charged with the duty of bringing order into the relations between the Catholic Church in the new Prussian state and the Roman Curia. He remained almost seven years in this delicate situation, and he finally completed his task, but, it must be confessed, in such a way that unprejudiced people soon began to fear that the optimism of Niebuhr with reference to the Curia had betrayed him into undue concessions. Those fears were soon enough justified. The Prussian government really did have the worst of the bargain. Niebuhr was of such a conservative nature, and so suggestible by religious motives, that he the more easily underrated the power with which he had to treat, especially for the very reason that the latter had just recovered from a humiliation without parallel, through the intervention of secular powers. . . . [Incorporation of the Papal States by France, 1809; restoration by Congress of Vienna, 1815.] How important the embassy of Niebuhr was for science, and in what a noble way he used the hospitality of the Eternal City, has been often enough related. In 1824 he returned to Germany and settled in Bonn in order to devote himself entirely to science and to his Roman history.<sup>1</sup>

There has been method in giving so much space to these biographical details. Similar evidence might be furnished in the cases of Savigny and Eichhorn. They are typical of the majority of the men, from 1555 to the present, who have developed German social science. Think of them and their doctrines as we will, most of the men who have evolved the technique of the social sciences as it has been adopted in Germany have been men whose ideas of methods have been shaped in large part by first-hand contact with practical economic and political affairs. As a rule they were not closet philosophers, dry-as-dusts, bookworms (Carlyle and *Sartor Resartus* to the contrary notwithstanding). It is important to keep this in mind as among the credentials of the realism, objectivity, of the scientific procedure which they developed.

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte der deutschen Historiographie* (1885).

## Again Wegele:

The significance of Niebuhr for historiography rests chiefly upon his Roman History, which he did not carry further than the first Punic War [264-221 B.C.]. . . . This his chief work has for us a double significance. In the first place, in so far as through the same the method of treatment which ruled almost without exception among those who attempted to interpret Roman history was once for all abolished; and second, because presently the new method which he now applied to the treatment of Roman history was transferred to the treatment of the history of all peoples and periods, and thus in imitation of him a new historical science was founded.<sup>1</sup> With reference to the first point, Niebuhr started with the assumption that whatever had been done in this field in the past was chiefly useful in understanding Roman antiquities, but not for history. . . . He directed his attacks principally against the almost universally prevailing tradition about the older epoch of Roman history. In the preface to the first edition of his first volume he says: "The history of the first four centuries of Rome is notoriously uncertain and falsified. It would be very foolish to blame Livy because he related it as, aside from a few doubts, purely historical. We have, however, another view of history, other requirements, and we must either not undertake to write the most ancient history of Rome, or we must undertake a quite other labor than the necessarily unsuccessful repetition of that which the Roman historian elevated to the rank of a creed of history. We must exert ourselves to discriminate both poetry and falsification. We must strain our vision in order to recognize the traits of truth freed from every gloss. The former, the detection of the fabulous, the removal of the fraudulent, may satisfy the critic. He is interested only in exposing a deceptive story, and he is satisfied with proposing certain suppositions, while the greater part of the whole remains in fragments. The historian, however, wants positive results. He must at least discover a probable correlation and a credible succession of events, at the point where his conviction challenges tradition." This, at all events, is a most essential trait in Niebuhr's criticism. In the midst of the débris of crumbling tradition he attempts . . . to recognize the veiled reality and to restore it. . . . He attributed to himself "a correct and very quick judgment, an almost infallible alertness in the discovery of the false, the incorrect, the untrue." Supported by this self-confidence he distinguished chaff from wheat, and sought, "with prophetic insight," to revivify the history of past times. . . . It deserves to be mentioned that the faith in the tradition about older Roman history, a tradition legitimated by the consecration of millennia, had struck so firm roots that it required rare

<sup>1</sup> This was the opinion of all the professors of history whom I heard in Berlin and Leipsic, 1879-81.



courage to oppose it after Niebuhr's fashion. He himself said, "Not at all times could one have ventured to assert himself in that way, without fear for his freedom or even his life. The philologists would have cried treason, the theologians would have found in it the crime of lèse majesté, public opinion would have stoned such a malefactor." That which is possible in such cases might be inferred from the instance of the Canton Uri, where, on the occasion of attacks upon the Tell tradition, a formal, and by no means mild punishment was threatened.<sup>1</sup>

Wegele again:

Goethe, to be sure, in this particular by no means a specialist, immediately found the correct word for the extraordinary proceeding: "The discrimination between poetry and history is invaluable, since neither is thereby destroyed, but rather each is properly established in its own worth and dignity. While it is endlessly interesting to see how the two merge and reciprocally operate, it would be desirable indeed if all phenomena of human events were treated in this manner."<sup>2</sup> While in Germany there were voices for and against this idea of criticism, the opinion of the scientific world gradually swung over, in principle, to the side of Niebuhr. At the same time foreign countries began to take sides with reference to his work. Especially in England there gradually appeared a proper understanding of it. No less a person than Macaulay said: "The appearance of the book is actually epochmaking in the history of European intelligence." The significance which the book had for Thomas Arnold, and the work which he performed in the way of getting recognition for the same in England, is well known. . . . Thus the fundamental theorems which in this case were applied for the first time in such a masterly manner were recognized as a guiding norm for all history. If we consequently seek to represent to ourselves the essential and the characteristic in his method, which produced such results, we refer to the following: First, there are two elements to which the total of his system may be traced back. The former concerns the criticism of the sources, and sets up a new and highly fruitful requirement. According to Niebuhr research may never forget, in the presence of any historical report, that it does not immediately present the narrated occurrences. It is rather immediately only the impress of the same upon the reporter. From this secondary impress arises the picture of the occurrences, and so finally the investigator has not merely to penetrate through the vision of the original reporter, but he has to press beyond him to the original form of the occurrence, and to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the experience of Alexander Brown, of Virginia, after he had impeached the Captain John Smith tradition in *The Genesis of the United States* (1890).

<sup>2</sup> Another adumbration of demand for objectivity throughout the social-science field!



observe it like an eye witness and a participant in the experience. This theorem sounds simple and almost self-evident, but it contains the sum of all exact knowledge in the historical realm. It took a long time for historiography to rise to that level, but from that arrival a new epoch begins, namely, the epoch of the genuine critical method.

For illustration, what happened when the reporter says: He "rushed," "sauntered," "shuffled," "strutted," "paraded," "sneaked," "staggered," "pussy-footed," down the street? There is interpretation, insinuation, innuendo, imputation of character, and motive, and moral quality, in each of the terms. The reporter consciously, by intention or by inadvertence, makes himself a judge. He causes his own attitude of indifferent or depreciatory animus toward the person in question to act as appraiser of the value of visible movements. It may be that there was absolutely nothing in the conduct reported in one of the alternative terms that would not have been adequately conveyed by the colorless statement, "he walked."

Still following Wegele:

The second chief demand of Niebuhr's method was that the historian shall transfer the past into the present; he shall live himself into the past to such a degree that he may have the attitude of a contemporary towards it. He must see the people and portray them as real people, not as puppets. For example, he shall know and point out that such a conceit as Homer's account of the siege of Troy cannot be literal. Battles are not decided in that way.

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What Niebuhr would have said to Ferrero's version of his method we can only imagine.

In the space at our disposal it is impossible to present a proper sample of Niebuhr's type of work. It may be indicated rather than exemplified by use of some quotations from a single chapter. Almost at random, we choose the section on "Romulus and Numa"<sup>1</sup> for the purpose. Niebuhr says:

The old Roman legend ran as follows: Procas, King of Alba left two sons. Numitor, the elder, being weak and spiritless, suffered Amulius to wrest the government from him, and reduce him to his father's private estates. In the

<sup>1</sup> I, 220.

enjoyment of these he lived rich, and, as he desired nothing more, secure: but the usurper dreaded the claims that might be set up by heirs of a different character. He had Numitor's son murdered, and appointed his daughter, Silvia, one of the vestal virgins.

Amulius had no children, or at least only one daughter; so that the race of Anchises and Aphrodite seemed on the point of expiring when the love of a god prolonged it, in despite of the ordinances of man, and gave it a lustre worthy of its origin. Silvia had gone into the sacred grove, to draw water from the spring for the service of the temple. The sun quenched its rays: the sight of a wolf made her fly into a cave; there Mars overpowered the timid virgin, and then consoled her with the promise of noble children, as Poseidon consoled Tyro the daughter of Salmoneus. But he did not protect her from the tyrant; nor could her protestations of her innocence save her. Vesta herself seemed to demand the condemnation of the unfortunate priestess; for at the moment when she was delivered of twins, the image of the goddess hid her eyes, her altar trembled, and her fire died away. Amulius ordered that the mother and her babes should be drowned in the river. In the Arnio Silvia exchanged her earthly life for that of a goddess. The river carried the (bole or) cradle in which the children were lying, into the Tiber, which had overflowed its banks far and wide, even to the foot of the woody hills. At the root of a wild fig tree, the *Ficus Ruminalis*, which was preserved and held sacred for many centuries, at the foot of the Palatine, the cradle overturned. A she-wolf came to drink of the stream; she heard the whimpering of the children, carried them into her den hard by, made a bed for them, licked and suckled them. When they wanted other food than milk, a woodpecker, the bird sacred to Mars, brought it to them. Other birds consecrated to auguries hovered over them, to drive away insects. This marvellous spectacle was seen by Faustulus, the shepherd of the royal flocks. The she-wolf drew back and gave up the children to human nurture. Acca Larentia, the shepherd's wife became their foster mother. They grew up, along with her twelve sons, on the Palatine hill, in straw huts which they built for themselves; that of Romulus was preserved by continual repairs, as a sacred relic, down to the time of Nero. They were the stoutest of the shepherd lads, fought bravely against wild beasts and robbers, maintaining their right against everyone by their might, and turning might into right. Their booty they shared with their comrades. The followers of Romulus were called Quinctilii, those of Remus, Fabii: the seeds of discord were soon sown amongst them. Their wantonness engaged them in disputes with the shepherds of the wealthy Numitor, who fed their flocks on Mount Aventine: so that here, as in the story of Evander and Cacus, we find the quarrel between the Palatine and the Aventine in the tales of the remotest

times. Remus was taken by a stratagem of these shepherds, and dragged to Alba as a robber. A secret foreboding, the remembrance of his grandsons, awakened by the story of the two brothers, kept Numitor from pronouncing a hasty sentence. The culprit's foster father hurried with Romulus to the city and told the old man and the youths of their kindred. They resolved to avenge their own wrong and that of their house. With their faithful comrades, whom the danger of Remus had brought to the city, they slew the king; and the people of Alba again became subject to Numitor.

So much for Niebuhr's résumé of the story as it had been handed down, and in the form in which it was generally accepted until well into the nineteenth century. Niebuhr never, so far as we are aware, drew up a scheme of formal principles of historical procedure. He did not invent a critical gauntlet which a story must run in order to rank as authentic history. He went about the work of inquiring into the credibility of tradition in ways which at once impeached history as then accepted. The methods of criticism, the idea of which he made commonplace, had to be systematized by later scholars.

In effect, however, this was what Niebuhr did. In general, he advertised the necessity of asking the questions, in the presence of any historical tradition whatsoever: On what grounds are we under any obligation of duty to believe this tradition? Farther than that, to what extent and in what sense, if any, have we a right to believe the tradition?

Then in a rather haphazard way, as it now seems, Niebuhr proceeded to indict a given story, like the one which we have chosen as a sample, on as many different charges of incredibility as seemed to be valid in the particular case.

It would be a labor of considerable severity to reduce his different canons of criticism to an orderly plan, and no attempt to perform that labor can be undertaken here. We may simply indicate its spirit. In the present case Niebuhr begins his comments in this way (p. 222):

This is the old tale, as it was written by Fabius [Fabius Pictor, about 200 B.C.] and sung in ancient sacred lays, down to the time of Dionysius. It certainly belongs to anything but history. Its essence is the marvellous.

We may strip this of its peculiarities and pare away and alter until it is reduced to a possible everyday occurrence; but we ought to be fully convinced that the *caput mortuum* which will remain will be anything but a historical fact. Mythological tales of this sort are misty shapes, often no more than a *fata morgana*, the prototype of which is invisible, the law of its refraction unknown; and even were it not so, it would still surpass the power of reflection to proceed so subtly and skillfully as to divine the unknown original from these strangely blended forms. But such magical shapes are different from mere dreams, and are not without a hidden ground of real truth. The name of dreams belongs to the fictions invented by the later Greeks, when the tradition had become extinct, and when individuals indulged a wanton license in altering the old legends; not considering that their diversity and multiplicity had been the work of the whole people, and was not a matter for the whole people to meddle with.

In the rough we may characterize Niebuhr's method as a combination of these major operations: (1) Exclusion of all mythological factors from direct consideration. (2) Comparison of all the known versions of a given tradition to discover (a) common material, (b) pointers toward common sources of the material. (3) In case a probable or possible common source for the given tradition can be discovered, examination into its credibility as evidence, e.g., how far away was it, in time or space, from the alleged occurrence; what probable or possible opportunities had the presumed author of this basic account to have first-hand knowledge of the alleged occurrences; what sort of credibility must be attached to the intermediate kinds of information upon which this basic account must have been dependent? (4) What auxiliary, circumstantial evidence, is available, such as archaeological remains or authentic knowledge of contemporary or related events, by which to test the credibility of the verbal records?

Niebuhr's application of such tests as these to extant material for reconstruction of the early life of the Romans was by no means a finished technique. Not a little fun has been poked at him by later students of Roman or other history, for suggestions in the line of reconstruction which were only a little less naïve than the tradition itself. The defective plausibility of many of his own



suggestions, as to what may have been the literal reality of the earlier experiences, should be held quite apart from the merits of his proposals for distinguishing the credible from the incredible in the existing evidence. While Niebuhr did not establish a complete system of historical methodology, he set a fashion of inquiring into the reliability of historical appearances which has been followed in principle by all competent historians since. The procedure which was not reduced by Niebuhr to precise formulation has been elaborated by all historical scholars in recent years. In principle it is assumed wherever there is pretension of scientific approach to history; and it is taken for granted as part of the auxiliary apparatus of every division of social science when it has to deal with past reality.

The most widely known application of the Niebuhr method is probably the use which has been made of it by the so-called "higher critics" of the Bible. In this case, too, it is not at all certain that absolute priority can be made out for the one or the other pioneer. It is certain that Niebuhr was not the sole originator of the method of which he became the most widely known exemplar. It is also not certain that Niebuhr gave the chief impulse to men who later influenced the development of historical method along the lines of which we have selected him as the representative. In the present sketch the aim is to indicate certain *constituent processes* in the evolution of social science, which could not fail to eventuate in the ultimate differentiation of a technique such as we now know by the name sociology. It is no part of the present plan to undertake settlement of claims as to the relative merit of different scholars for promoting this evolution. We select men who by common consent are eminent in their respective specialties, and we use them as indexes of the element in the scientific evolution which they, among others, developed. This latter, not the man in the case, is the center of our attention.

Toward the middle of the nineteenth century the University of Tübingen in Württemberg had begun to be a focus of attention throughout the religious world because of its theological faculty.



Beginning with F. C. Baur, who was professor of theology from 1826 to 1860, certain variations from evangelical orthodoxy began to build up a reputation to which the general term "Tübingen School" was applied. Baur himself was understood to deny that supernatural elements can have a permanent place in religion. The ill repute in which, for this reason, Tübingen began to be held among cautious theologians was intensified by the appearance of Strauss's (D.F.) *Leben Jesu* in 1834-35.<sup>1</sup> Strauss had been one of Baur's students, had been a tutor at Tübingen, but was not on the staff when his book appeared. It was a version of the life of Jesus reduced to wholly naturalistic elements and reconstructed from that basis. These facts are stated with neither assertion nor denial that they were directly connected with Niebuhr's method, but rather as indications of currents in the academic atmosphere of Germany at the time which affected all departments of humanistic thought. Then came the man whose influence has proved to be more permanent than that of any other member of the Tübingen group—Ewald (1803-75), whose most significant work from our point of view was his *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (1843-59). While far less iconoclastic than Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, Ewald's *History of Israel* tried to do for the Old Testament what Niebuhr attempted with Roman tradition. Ewald tried to reconstruct the history as the canonical order of the Old Testament books makes it appear, in the first place by trying to rearrange the record in historical sequence, and then by passing its contents through a winnowing process to eliminate the purely mythical, and to place and evaluate objectively its poetic and prophetic elements. Thus the Tübingen movement focalized tendencies which were related to systematic and historical theology as the larger historical movement was related to social science in general. From the beginnings thus indicated, and which soon came to be known indiscriminately among the conservatives as "*destructive criticism*," there followed a flood of literature in which, on the Old Testament side, Kuenen, *The Religion*

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Ernest Renan did not publish *La vie de Jésus* until 1863.

of Israel and Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, are outstanding; on the New Testament side lives of Jesus by Farrar, Geikie, Renan, Edersheim, and many others, both in the conservative and the critical interest. To speak within bounds, this impulse has left a permanent impression upon religious thinking in the Western world.

The following note is quoted from the article on Ewald in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the publication of his *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* was epoch-making in that branch of research, as much as was the work of Niebuhr in relation to the history of Rome. In its final form, the result of thirty years' labor, it is a noble monument to the genius of its author. No one can fail to be struck with the profundity of insight and patience of research which it displays. While in every line it bears the marks of Ewald's intense individuality, it is at the same time a highly characteristic product of the age, and even decade, in which it first appeared. If it is obviously the outcome of immense learning on the part of its author, it is no less manifestly the result of the speculations and researches of many laborious predecessors in all departments of history, theology and philosophy. Especially is it indebted to the so-called "destructive criticism." The Reformation had destroyed that mediaeval conception of the Bible which took no account of literary history or doctrinal development at all; and subsequent researches, especially since those of Astruc [1753], had made it abundantly clear that the conditions under which the Old Testament books had come into being were much more complicated than had been at one time supposed. Criticism, however, could not possibly rest satisfied with these purely negative results. If for a time it seemed as if the sacred literature had been reduced to a mere chaos of fragments, which men might well despair of ever being able to reduce to harmony and order, the historical sense had been developing no less remarkably than the spirit of criticism. Taught by some of the more modern schools of philosophy, men had been learning to take larger and therefore juster views of the principles that underlie all national histories and the general history of the human race. It was impossible that such a phenomenon as the Jewish people and their literature should be permanently set aside as wholly incomprehensible. The world was only waiting for a bold and vigorous constructive genius like that of Ewald to bring together the scattered fragments and construct them into an intelligible unity; to show, for example, that, if the Psalter could no longer be regarded as the record of the spiritual experience of the individual to whom it had been traditionally ascribed, it became all the more precious when known to embody

all the highest aspirations and purest joys and noblest sorrows of many centuries of national life; and that if the legislation of the Pentateuch was not indeed, as had once been supposed, the work of a few quiet months, it gained in interest and instructiveness when known to be the slow growth of many busy generations. Taking up the idea of a divine education of the human race, which Lessing and Herder had made so familiar to the modern mind, and firmly believing that to each of the leading nations of antiquity a special task had been providentially assigned, Ewald felt no difficulty about Israel's place in universal history, or about the problem which that primitive and highly endowed race had been called upon to solve. The history of Israel, according to him, is simply the history of the manner in which the one true religion really and truly came into the possession of mankind. Other nations, indeed, had attempted the highest problems in religion; but Israel alone had, in the providence of God, succeeded, for Israel alone had been inspired. Such is the supreme meaning of that national history which began with the exodus and culminated, at the same time terminating [as Ewald thought] in the appearing of Christ, the supremely perfect revelation or self-manifestation of God. The historical interval that separated these two events is treated as naturally dividing itself into three great periods—those of Moses and the theocracy, of David and the monarchy, of Ezra and the hagiocracy. The periods are externally indicated by the successive names by which the chosen people were called—Hebrews, Israelites, Jews. The events prior to the exodus are relegated by Ewald to a preliminary chapter of primitive history; and the events of the apostolic and post-apostolic age are treated as a kind of appendix. The entire construction of the history is based, as has already been said, on a critical examination and chronological arrangement of the available documents. So far as the results of criticism are still uncertain with regard to the age and authorship of any of them, Ewald's conclusions must of course be regarded as unsatisfactory; and it cannot be denied that later investigations have shown that in many important points his firm faith that finality had been attained was illusory. These admissions, however, hardly affect the permanent value of his work. It will continue to be a storehouse of learning for all subsequent investigators in the field of sacred history, and it will be increasingly recognized as a work of rare genius. It would be impossible to praise too highly the conscientiousness with which the minutest features of the history have been carefully scanned; the marvellous power of combination which, at even the most unlikely points, can draw the most graphic illustrations from contemporary prophets and poets; the vividness with which not only the politics, but also the religion, the arts, the literature, the domestic life, of each successive period are depicted; the loving enthusiasm of the student who believes that those only are the enemies of the Bible who fail to investigate it, or who fail to investigate it thoroughly.

## CHAPTER V

### RANKE AND DOCUMENTATION

Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) has probably exerted more influence upon professional historians since 1850 than any other of the group we are considering. It is not too much to say that, on the whole, historical study throughout the world, and historical writing in general, have not advanced in principle very much beyond a somewhat shrunken reflection of the pattern which Ranke set.<sup>1</sup> This pattern added a specification to the demands chiefly urged by the men already named, which specification has more conspicuously controlled the programs of historians than all the other demands together. This pattern may be reduced to the formula: *Verify by authentic documents*, preferably official documents!

Ranke seems to have had a larger conception of the mission of historians than either of the men whom we have discussed. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that he left on record more distinct expressions of a comprehensive view of history than we have received from his fellow-craftsmen. For example, his literary executor, Dove,<sup>2</sup> quotes as follows, from a letter which Ranke wrote at about the age of twenty-one, the period in which he was feeling his way toward a life-calling. He explains in an apologetic way his attitude toward theology:

There must be people, also, whose sole satisfaction in life is a study to which they devote themselves. I reckon myself in that class. . . . Is it worldly? You ask: . . . is there anything worldly in the world, anything ungodly! . . . In all history God resides and lives and gives Himself to be known. Every act testifies of Him. Every moment preaches His name, most of all, however, it seems to me, the correlation of history at large. It<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This in spite of notable exceptions of which our own country has its share.

<sup>2</sup> *Allg. deutsch. Biog.*

<sup>3</sup> The reference of the pronoun is not clear in the original; the meaning requires the antecedent, *history*.

appears then like a sacred hieroglyphic comprehended and remembered, perhaps, in order that it may not be lost to future more intelligent centuries. Wherefore, whatever happens, our business is to decipher this sacred hieroglyphic. In that way also we serve God. In that way also we are priests and teachers. [The biographer adds: "All his life Ranke retained without hesitation a religious view of the nature and value of his science."]

It is not necessary to question this testimony. Whether it is true or not, it does not affect one way or the other the importance of Ranke in the particular relation which is now to be emphasized. The same writer continues:

[Ranke's idea of the world's history from the start inclines towards the positive science of the nineteenth century, especially in the fact that it sought knowledge of the whole entirely on the basis of precise investigation of the parts, the essence of the whole in the heart of the particular.]. . . . In 1826 he says: "You know my old purpose to search out the fable of the world history, that is, the whole course of occurrences and developments of our race which must be regarded as the real content of the circumstances, as their centre and essence; that is, the purpose to comprehend all the deeds and sufferings—the active and passive experiences of this wild, emotional, violent, good, noble, calm, stained and pure creature which we ourselves are, in their origin and in their substance."

It may be noted in passing that the yearning which Ranke expressed in this way was itself one of the links in the chain of impulse which, after 1883, appeared in the differentiated form of the American sociological movement. In every age since men have gone on record, this yearning to make out the riddle of human life from beginning to end has actuated a few thinkers. The aim has been pursued more or less constantly, more or less methodically. It has taken the shape now of chronicles, now of philosophy; toward the end of the eighteenth century it had become the inspiration of a large number of philosophers of history. After the first decade of the nineteenth century it was present but discreetly clothed in the programs of such critical historians as we are reviewing. No less really than their more naïve predecessors they wanted to unravel the riddle of history, but they had come to see that we must first



know what the occurrences that it is desirable to interpret actually were. They rebuked incontinent explanations of occurrences not yet precisely ascertained.

The immemorial yearning after comprehensive interpretation of human experience reappeared in the American sociological movement. We may characterize that movement partially in this connection, as a revival of the same ambition which had actuated the philosophers of history, but the ambition was somewhat chastened by the warnings of the critical historians; and its methods were specialized through the mediating influence of all the approaches to objectivity by both social and physical science. It was quite in accord with the spirit of critical history that Ranke should keep his yearning for comprehensive interpretation well in the background, while he left in the minds of most of his immediate and remote followers the impression that reconstruction of historical episodes or epochs, *in so far as we can find them reflected in documentary evidence*, is the be all and the end all of history.

The biographer already quoted adds a revealing touch to his portrait of Ranke in this way:

. . . . In his mind the immediate vehicles of the decisive were not the heroes alone, but the princes, the leaders and controllers of every sort are in the foreground, while the merely passive multitude is less conspicuous, but fills the rear of his stage.

A page or so later this additional stroke gives lifelikeness to the picture:

We see that something beside his conception of world history is necessary to explain why Ranke felt himself held back from investigation of antiquities. He was impelled by interest in constitutional and economic history, but he distrusts the certainty of a kind of knowledge which must be taken largely from conjecture, from hypothetical combination of circumstances, and not without the assistance of construction of the analogy from monuments and original records. He was not attracted as others are by mystery. He wanted only the light. Prudent in search, he desired to find the tenable. From conviction that "only that part of life can be distinctly represented which has been preserved in writings," he devotes himself to the fundamental principle

"to be content with that which is verbally transmitted or which can be developed with a degree of certainty from such verbal transmission."

In other words, Ranke became a reproducer of records which previous generations had deliberately set down in writing. To what extent either of the several traits thus indicated was cause of the others and of his total tendency, and to what extent the several traits were effects of one another and of his entire method is a question not essential to our inquiry. We are immediately concerned with the fact that Ranke's great influence converged upon the program of making history consist of recounting, *so far as extant records afford the means of recounting*, occurrences which are certified by official documents. These occurrences are, of course, principally the experiences of official people, in church, state, army, i.e., ecclesiastical and civil politics, diplomacy, and war. Ranke's distinctive technique was the procedure necessary to recover, authenticate, and interpret the documentary evidence of occurrences within these categories.

Having said so much in general, additional details are pertinent to our purpose merely as side lights.

Ranke began his career as a writer of history in 1824, that is, at the age of twenty-nine. At that time he published Volume I of a projected work entitled *Geschichte der romanisch-germanischen Völker*. It was never completed except as his later works represented more intensive treatment of chapters that might have carried out his mature ideas of a comprehensive survey. The volume contained an appendix, however, which was virtually the prospectus of all of Ranke's subsequent work, or his professional platform. It was entitled, *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtsschreiber*.

In the Preface Ranke says:

The present work has three purposes; first, to justify the method by which I have used the sources in my attempt at a history of the Romanic and Germanic peoples; second, to give those who want to inform themselves about the beginnings of modern history instruction with reference to the books which they may and may not use for this purpose; third, to contribute, so far as I am able, references to the chief and strictly scientific writings, in the nature of authorities,

which may serve toward collecting an uncorrupted mass of material for modern history, for a fundamental judgment about the nature and value of the works extant with reference to these sources.

One who for the first time confronts the multitudinous movements of modern history must have a feeling like that which one would have who confronted a great collection of antiquities in which genuine and spurious, beautiful and repulsive, important and insignificant, from many nations and periods, were heaped together without order. In either case the material confronted would speak in a thousand voices. It manifests the most diverse natures. It is clothed in all colors. Some of the specimens march solemnly back and forth. They aim to be demonstrative. They think they are exhibiting the ways of antiquity. Others attempt to derive from the past theorems for the future. Many want to defend or to attack. Not a few are zealous to develop the explanation of occurrences on deep grounds, from the basis of subjective conditions and emotions. Then there are some which have only the purpose of passing along what has happened. These are to be classed as the high witnesses who furnished reports. The persons participating in the action speak. Original sources, alleged and actual, are present in abundance.

Before all the question arises, "Which among many is a source of original knowledge? From which can we be truly instructed?" To answer this question in respect to the beginning of modern history,<sup>1</sup> in connection with contemporary authors, is, as observed, the chief purpose of the present monograph. Yet the intention of the same is directed only toward a contribution. It cannot be exhaustive and does not attempt to be. It takes the following course: it starts with the historical writers who appear to be at once the most celebrated.

Ranke then indicates a trunk line of historians who have popularized one and the same tradition, viz.:

1. Guicciardini (1483-1540), *Istoria d'Italia; Storia Fiorentina; Reggimento di Firenze, etc.* (cf. *Encyc. Brit.*, 9th ed., *in loco*).

Of the contemporary writer best known to us, Ranke says: "Machiavelli is in the strict sense not a historian of this period, but he has handed down much important information about the same. He has communicated opinions which have such deep roots in the period and influenced it so strongly that he could not be overlooked. I speak of him in an appendix." The Appendix occupies twenty-three pages.

<sup>1</sup> Ranke assumes that modern history should be dated from the period of the Medici, or say 1492.

2. Bishop Belcarius (Franz Beaucaire) (1461-1566), *Commentarie rerum gallicarum*.

3. Sismondi (1773-1842) *History of the Italian Republics* (1st vol., 1807). Ranke says that Sismondi "relied 27 times in the 104th chapter of his Italian History, and also 27 times in the 105th chapter," on Beaucaire, while Beaucaire "immediately follows Guicciardini."

Thereupon Ranke enters upon analysis of the competence as witnesses or as interpreters of the competent witnesses, of the men who have been accepted as historians in the leading European countries. The essay falls into five divisions with a co-ordinate division for a conclusion, viz.: I. The Italian general historians of the period; II. The Italian historians of particular states or events during the period; III. The Spaniards; IV. The Germans; V. The French; VI. What remains to be done.

In the case of each author Ranke tries to furnish a biographical setting which will afford clues to the scientific quality of the man's work. We may get a general impression of the sort of inquisition to which Ranke subjected historical exhibits from a few passages in his examination of Guicciardini.

#### WHETHER GUICCIARDINI CAN BE REGARDED THROUGHOUT AS A SOURCE

Having stated that Guicciardini is "the foundation of all the later works on the beginning of modern history," Ranke continues:

In the case of the writers of original information whom we are accustomed to call the source writers, and their work as sources, the first question is whether they were participants or whether they were merely contemporary. In the year 1492, from which Guicciardini makes his start, he was 10 years old. We may easily assume that for perhaps twenty more years, especially because he was devoting himself to the study and practice of legal science, his observations must have been inadequate. Even after he was sent to Spain he could have had only inadequate knowledge of Italian affairs, but later than this, while he was president of the Romangna, while he was commander in Reggio and Parma, while he was Luogotenente of the Pope with the consolidated army, he took part in the transactions and observed much of importance.

The consequence is that his history falls into two portions. The one comprises the events in which he took part, the other those in which this was not the case. Obviously in case of the great mass which he tells he was in part and often wholly dependent upon remote information. Before all use of his book we must ask whether his information was original and when borrowed, in what way it was borrowed, and through what sort of investigation it was collected.

Obviously it must be presupposed that the last part, relating to a period in which the writer occupied places of high dignity, speaks of transactions in which he himself was an actor, and had the best opportunity to know the facts precisely, contains the most original, instructive and best sifted information. Precisely here, however, his work seems to be lacking in independence and dependent upon others.

There is in existence a work . . . by the so-called Capella, private secretary of the Milan minister Marone. This book is at present forgotten. In the first eleven years, however, after it appeared, 1531-1542, it passed through eleven editions in Latin, and more than this, two German, one Spanish, and one Italian translations were made. It is the basis of many later books. Now I observe first that Guicciardini even in the case of the most important events in which he must have had a hand, mainly original reports, follows this Capella step by step. [Then numerous examples follow. . . .]

It is consequently certain that in this description of an important period, in which Guicciardini was a man of high repute and in the most important connections, nevertheless he took the most of the information about his own time from a well-known book some of which is false and some of which is very doubtful. I should be very glad to praise and glorify this writer, but would it not be very wrong, in case there is certain glory in the original tradition of important events to take this glory from the man to whom it belongs and to give it to another who did not so much deserve it? As a general proposition it must be observed that Galleazzio's book is either used or translated by Guicciardini from the 14th book on, or that it is at least chiefly in mind although always unnamed. . . . In view of these facts Guicciardini's historical work will scarcely be able to maintain its previous reputation for authoritativeness as to original knowledge and his precise investigation. It will be necessary to go over the sources of information which were accessible to him. Yet it would again be unjust to him to treat him as one of the authors who merely reproduce second-hand material.

It is very obvious that in the case of occurrences which took place in Florence and which were of immeasurable importance to him, for instance the arrival of Charles VIII in Tuscany, he used the narrative of another writer which is to be found in the book of Rucellai, *de Bello Italico*. . . .

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We are very far from asserting that Guicciardini merely copied Rucellai, but that the elder author exerted a considerable influence upon his younger friend and determined his conception is very plain. . . .

That which belongs to Guicciardini personally may be found in the discourses which he weaves into his narrative. Nothing can be more instructive with reference to these than to compare the narratives of Rucellai and Guicciardini about the summons of Piero by Charles and about the Council of Venice concerning this. It will appear from such comparison that Guicciardini added nothing to the facts, but that he makes some appropriate observation about Piero's state of mind, about his habit of asking his advice and about the danger of the same.

#### ON SPEECHES OF GUICCIARDINI

Five years after Guicciardini's work first appeared Johann Bodin wrote in Chapter 4 of his "*Methodus ad facilem historiae cognitionem*" with reference to the same: "*Est mirum in eo studium veritatis inquirendae. Fertur epistolas, decreta, foedera, ex ipsis fontibus hausisse et expressisse. Itaque frequenter occurrit illud: 'locutus est haec verba,' aut si ipsa verba defuerint: 'locutus est in hanc sententiam.'*" We see that in Bodin's opinion the speeches are genuine and he distinguishes the cases in which he quotes the exact words and those in which only the thoughts of the reader are given. Although this opinion is not quite clear of contradictions, it has prevailed until the present time. Not to refer to Sismondi, four years ago Pierre Daru appropriated several of these speeches in his history of Venice and declares that he does not find certain others so authentic. This assumption would be well grounded, only if we could at least quote a few of which it was certain from other evidence that they actually were so pronounced. So far as I am aware nobody has ever presented such proof. How will it stand, however, if it appears that even the speeches of which Guicciardini might have had, or even must have had, authentic information, that is, the Florentine speeches, were essentially altered by him?

Then Ranke goes on to analyze certain speeches and to show that this was the case. His conclusion is stated on page 23 as follows:

We see that of the speeches of Guicciardini in all probability some were never made as he presents them, others were at least in different form, and it has yet to be proved that in a single case his report is entirely genuine. If we consider further that sometimes after speech and reply are elaborated, the real moving factors must be thought behind both . . . it is still more evident that they merely serve the discourse, the contemplation of a given subject from

all sides, and confirm the possibility that they have practically nothing in common with historical monuments. Not merely the example of the ancients stimulated Guicciardini in this connection. The learned of that time had immersed themselves in the antique manner in such a degree that the same disposition on which Livy relied when he ventured to weave fanciful speeches into his *Decades* was taken by our author as a matter of course.

After discussing in a similar spirit the reputed "authorities" on the period, Ranke summarizes his general conclusion under the title, "What Remains to Be Done."

Many as are the authors whom we have mentioned as writing about the beginning of modern history, and many as are the efforts that have been put forth in this direction, they have still left plenty of room for future service. We repeat first what was said about the more general historians of this period, that is, everyone will recognize that their information was neither adequate nor authentic, that we are feeling around in the dark so long as we follow them wholly. We found only Jovius to be a genuinely rich source, but he is full of gaps, more eloquent than profound, and not everywhere unbiased. We are driven from the more general historians to the writers about the particular states and detailed occurrences.

In the few pages following Ranke develops the moral: *Ergo, complete collection and exploitation of archives as substitutes for all this irresponsible tradition.*

We need add only that by general consent among German historians the works in which Ranke exhibits results of his technique at its best were: (1) *The Roman Popes, Their Church and Their State, in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1834-36); (2) *German History of the Period of the Reformation* (6 vols., 1839-47).

## CHAPTER VI

### COLLECTION AND USE OF ARCHIVES

In its turn each of the historical factors thus far characterized was partly cause, partly effect, of another methodological development both logically and empirically involved in each, but sufficiently detached to have seemingly an independent existence. Both as cause and as effect of the developing appreciation of the importance of sources, the conviction grew that sources must not be left to accidental preservation. They must be guarded from dispersion and destruction. They must be systematically arranged, edited, and put in available shape for use in constructive study. In time then there appeared (1826) in Germany the first volume of the collections entitled *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.<sup>1</sup> Different in detail, but corresponding with the same fundamental demand are the French Archives in Paris, the Rolls Series in London, the Archives Division of the Congressional Library in Washington, and many other less-known collections.

Says Wegele:

It goes without saying that when in Germany, under the weight of the circumstances of the time, return to the past for information began, and the so long repressed national feeling had begun to assert itself, the general sympathy of scholars, as well as of the cultured classes in general, would turn to the history of the Fatherland. The Romanticists and their followers had made the beginning with national poetry. The Historical School came into co-operation with this movement to develop a sense for genuine historical interpretation, to lay the foundations for the history of German law, and finally once for all to furnish a valid example of the scientific method and of historical criticism. We may indeed say that the hour of the restoration of a German history which would be worthy of the name had struck. This view was somewhat extensively held, and remained during the period of the restoration in active force. . . .

<sup>1</sup> The University of Chicago library has 110 volumes, from the fifth to the fifteenth century.

It is a matter of astonishment that the scholars named are filled with such confidence in their own isolated abilities, while at the same time the thought began to be very influential that it was necessary to collect the sources of German history for the Middle Ages, in the utmost completeness, and to publish them with critical notes. The project of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* was the crystallization of this idea. . . . The circumstances were highly unfavorable. The mood of many of the German states was even positively opposed to the undertaking. Detached collections, as is well known, were undertaken here and there within the previous century and a half, but everything that was done displayed lack of co-operation and system. None of the promoters of these undertakings seemed to show the slightest ability to rise above these limitations. Now, after the return of peace and of better times, those thoughts returned with renewed energy, and efficient co-operation at length began. The greatest German statesman of the epoch, Freiherr Karl vom Stein, put himself at the head of the movement, and his power to bring things to pass, his insight, his self-sacrificing support really gave to the nation the finished work of this enormous undertaking. In February, 1818, he started the first movement in this direction. A little later he won over to the undertaking several self-sacrificing friends and some of the contemporary ambassadors at the *Bundestag*. January 20, 1819, there assembled at Frankfurt-a.-M. *die Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*. It chose for its legend the words: *Sanctus amor patriae dat animum*. This body undertook the guidance and execution of the proposed enterprise. . . . It decided at once to issue a journal, *Das Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*. In this journal, the forestudies for the collection of sources, reports upon manuscripts, description of journeys, etc., were to be presented. As was to be expected from the nature of the case, many sorts of difficulties at once presented themselves. Among scholars, co-operation was genuine enough, but insight into what was essentially to be desired was very often painfully lacking. The most incompetent people flocked to the enterprise and the most impracticable proposals were made. Under such circumstances, Freiherr vom Stein was at the point of losing the patience which was essential to success. Then came the Karlsbad Decrees.<sup>1</sup> A man like Dahlmann, who was won over to co-operation

<sup>1</sup> Resolutions adopted by the congress of ministers of all the German states, September 20, 1819. They had to do with regulation of the execution of the votes of the *Bund*, they aimed at maintenance of the monarchical principle; they provided for supervision of the universities; for censorship of periodicals and of other publications not exceeding 320 pages each; and for the establishment of a commission of inquiry into revolutionary activities. The Decrees were a triumph of political reaction. They operated so unfortunately for the political development of Germany that they were repealed by the *Bundestag*, April 2, 1848.

in the work by Niebuhr withdrew his consent because the enterprise would be put into close relationships with the German confederation, by which these Decrees were sanctioned. The several German courts by no means outdid themselves in giving to this national enterprise their protection or their support. In Austria the beginnings of the movement were looked upon indeed as suspicious, because it started with a "*Verein*." The scholars of Austria were even forbidden to join the Society.

Finally, however, the victory was won. The difficulties were at last overcome. The chief matter was, however, that at the right moment a man was found to whose hands the scientific execution of the undertaking could be entrusted with confidence: Georg Heinrich Pertz, of Hanover, an extraordinarily talented pupil of Heeren, who had already won a reputation by a valuable monograph on the *Merovingische Hausmeier*. A tour of Vienna and Italy, particularly to Rome, undertaken by Pertz under the auspices of the Society, resulted not merely in the richest finds of material, but at the same time it gave proof of the unlimited competence of the young man. Immediately after his return, the editorship of the collection of the sources was conferred upon him. The light now dawned, and the mists cleared away which had long hung over the enterprise. In the year 1824 the plan of the same was published, and in 1826 the first volume appeared. Therewith a new epoch of German historiography began, and we are still under the influence of that movement. . . .

The most novel trait was the careful handling of the texts. This had never occurred before except in the case of the classic authors. It was made a fundamental principle to take the best manuscript as the basis for each series, and thus to strive for the utmost correctness and reliability of the text. Another item, hardly less important, was the precise critical investigation of the sources, and the analysis of them into their component parts. In this way it was brought about that the genuine and the spurious were differentiated, the counterfeit was thrown out, and at the same time it was discovered to what extent it was dependent upon others, and in that case upon whom. These fundamental principles were applied with the highest degree of success through the whole long series of the volumes, so far as they have appeared. . . . Meanwhile the German government, particularly the *Bundestag*, recognized the high importance of the matter, and by financial support insured the success of the undertaking. That Pertz could not permanently by himself alone carry out the task with which he had been entrusted, was to be expected. . . . He associated with himself, among others, Georg Waitz, a pupil of Ranke, who brought to the enterprise the advantage of methodical training and rare power to work. His share in the carrying out of the program was not less than that of Pertz.



As the strength of the latter declined, Waitz was regarded as the only one who could be placed at the head of the newly organized society [1875] and this transfer of authority was actually made. Waitz and his associates constituted a sort of school. Some of them furnished more, others less in the way of knowledge of the historical sources, and of the extension and application of the proper theorems for the treatment of the material.<sup>1</sup>

As an extra precaution, we repeat that this argument does not presume to pronounce upon the rank which belongs to different men in the historical hierarchy. We are asserting neither absolute priority nor absolute pre-eminence. We are dealing with pioneers who were eminent, and with the influences to which at all events they added force. Countless other men, both in Germany and in other European countries, would have to be considered if an award of comparative merit were to be made. There is plenty of room for difference of opinion as to their relative importance. These differences of opinion are trifles compared with the substantial matter, namely: influences such as those signalized in sections II-VI, have actually created a thought world which was the habitat of the men in the United States who began to revolt against the obsolescent social science of the American schools and American public life. It is necessary to have a sympathetic understanding of these influences in order to appreciate the beginnings of the American sociological movement.

As a sample of divergent opinions as to particular men, we may cite Professor William M. Sloane, of Columbia University, on Heeren. In his paper entitled "History in the Nineteenth Century,"<sup>2</sup> he says:

It will appear, I think, on dispassionate examination, that the beginning of fruitfully scientific study in history, the initiation of the modern method, is to be found in Heeren [1760-1842].<sup>3</sup> Unlike Niebuhr, he builded with new materials. Beginning as a philosopher, he applied in ancient history the Socratic method, and discovered that the states of antiquity could be understood only in the light of their institutions and their politics. Entering on a

<sup>1</sup> *Gesch. d. deutsch. Histor.*, p. 1010.

<sup>2</sup> *St. Louis Congress of Arts and Science*, II, 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Handbuch der Geschichte des europäischen Staatensystems und seiner Colonien*. (3d ed., 1819).

profound investigation of these, he found them so interlaced with their foreign relations that he examined under compulsion both Greece and Rome in their connection alike with Egypt and with Carthage. Even with the imperfect information of the time, he brought to light the momentous principle of *mutation*, as dependent not merely on outward form but on internal structure (morphology). His is the vital notion of comparing contemporary histories in short periods, as opposed to the elucidation of single ones in long succeeding cycles of time. For this is essential to our later doctrine of the unity of history, without which no true science of the same, however rudimentary, is at all possible. With a consciousness of this grand truth as probably applicable to every period of history, he essayed it in the following epochs and evolved the concept which, revolutionary then, is now the cornerstone of modern history, that of the state-system of Europe, the basis upon which Macaulay erected the great reputation which he deserves.

It may be asserted of Heeren now, as was hinted by a French critic in his lifetime, that he avoided every pitfall into which cumbrous thoroughness throws its German votaries, and escaped every trap which over-confident logic sets for its acrobatic French disciples.

As commentary upon this judgment we submit the facts that George Bancroft was a pupil of Heeren, translator of his most important work, mentioned above, and others of his writings; during his formative years Sloane was for a time Bancroft's private secretary.

We agree with Professor Sloane as to the importance of the sociological principle which he calls *mutation*. Without the name, it was among the most effective concepts in the minds of the early American sociologists. So far as Heeren deserves credit for discovery of the same, he is an instance of the failure of history to register accurate judgments. Heeren certainly did not "catch on," in the estimate of historians, as did the other men whom we have mentioned. His name does not appear in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, nor in the fifth—sixth edition of Bernheim's *Historische Methode* (see p. 108).

Professor Sloane's estimate of Niebuhr may also be put in evidence:

The first reaction against what was after all a phantom, stately though it were, sprang rather from feeling than from knowledge; it was a rebound of

logic and not of reason. This premature revolt is probably best illustrated in the case of Niebuhr. Though powerful, the mind of the great Danish diplomat was dry and disdainful: contemptuous of the practical and judicial. In his field of ancient history he substituted for painstaking research and for concrete reasoning a method based on gratuitous assumptions, a method which destroyed traditional reality, to erect in its place a baseless fabric of credulous negations. It has been the task of his successors, beginning with Mommsen and ending with Taine's fine treatise on Livy, to dissipate his airy structure of so-called analytic criticism. Considerate as they have been, they have left upright only a few of his original contentions, and these the least important, wherewith to uphold, for shame's sake, the vanishing renown of his name. The indications of archaeological discovery at this hour all point to the ultimate annihilation of every principle and position which he enunciated. Could his shade be seen strolling today across the excavated Roman Forum, and its crowding reflections be recorded for our benefit, the muttered syllables of its *vanitas vanitatum* would instruct our generation how superior is even the older notion of history as a compound of poetry and philosophy to the substitutes, which merely dissect and compare abstractions, which beget negations and bring forth only specious presumptions.<sup>1</sup>

Thus re-echoes the academic rivalry which was loud during the lifetime of the principals. For decades it has been notorious among historians that Niebuhr shot his bolt with his engines of destruction. His attempts at reconstruction perished by the very weapons of criticism which he had sharpened. Yet this fact does not impeach the main claim above. The rule has become categorical in every division of social science: Criticize your evidence!

<sup>1</sup> *St. Louis Congress of Arts and Science, loc. cit.* The present writer heard lecturers on history at Berlin and Leipzig during the years 1879-81. The name of Niebuhr was repeated over and over again in the spirit of Wegele's estimate (above, pp. 80-85). If Heeren's name was mentioned it did not register in witness's memory.

## CHAPTER VII

### PRESENT HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY

In closing this part of our introduction to present sociological technique, emphasis must again be put upon the explanation that the present outline is not an essay in the methodology of historical research or of historical writing. We have merely marked a few of the commonplaces of historical consciousness which have had notable influence upon the development of sociological consciousness. In so doing we have scarcely approached within parleying distance of dependable historical procedure. The technique of historical research and exposition is a combination of arts which, like laboratory methods, may be described in words but they can be acquired only by practice. Not historical students alone, but all students of social science, because all have more or less occasion to evaluate historical evidence, should, as a part of their necessary equipment, master Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode* (6th ed., 1908). An infallible authority on the technique of any portion of social science is hardly conceivable. Bernheim is obviously debatable, from his fundamental perplexed philosophy concerning how the purpose of history is to be described as between the particular and the universal, on to the minutest judgment as to the sifting of evidence. No one, however, has so comprehensively exhibited the kinds of judgments which are involved in responsible exercise of historical sense. Whether a professional historian or not, no one can be a responsible social scientist without maturely developed historical sense. From this point of view the importance of such a compendium as the *Historische Methode* for all social scientists is too obvious for argument. Much less minute in analysis of method is Seignobos, *La méthode historique appliquée aux sciences sociales*, 1901. Of first-rate importance for the general scope of

our argument is Merz, "History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century" (*Of Society*, Vol. IV, chap. x). Merz does not see the nineteenth-century movement in the same perspective which we are drawing, and from the viewpoint of our argument that is a serious defect. Even if he is wrong, his work supplies details which should be organized into an objective interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See also the less detailed treatise, Langlois and Seignobos, *Introduction to the Study of History* (1898; 2d. ed., 1912).



## CHAPTER VIII

### APPROACHES TO OBJECTIVE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SCIENCE IN GERMANY: CAMERALISM<sup>1</sup>

With the exception of history, the social sciences in the modern sense have their origin in Germany in the theory of government. From the ninth century to the sixteenth, the actual government of the Germans had been a tangle of local customs and Roman legal traditions. Whatever may have been the religious or the ecclesiastical significance of the Reformation in Germany, on its political side it was a revolt of a small regiment of German princes, supported by their subjects, against the overlordship of the church division of the Holy Roman Empire. It was an assertion of sovereignty by each of the princes over his particular domain.<sup>2</sup> These principalities ranged from a population of a few hundreds (in the case of a few knights of the empire—*Reichsritter*) to several millions; and in number there were at one time upwards of four hundred of these quasi-sovereign groups.

In spirit, and in form of life, these principalities were merely patriarchal estates, with patriarchal management of the people on the estates. As life grew more complex, and as peaceful and hostile contacts with other states made the problems of management more difficult, the primitive simplicity of the patriarchal condition failed to meet the needs of the situation; and the German states had to set about the invention of more elaborate governmental systems. We may take as the date to mark this change, 1555 (Von Osse).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Small, *Encyc. Amer.*, title "Sociology," p. 209; and Small, *The Cameralists*, Preface and chaps. i, "Introduction," and xxii, "Summary."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*; Henderson, *Short History of Germany*.

Both private and public law in Germany were labyrinths of entangled German and Roman tradition. In order to find a starting-place at all for tracing the growth of German social science, we must ignore the old governmental and legal traditions, and we must observe the new tendencies which at last grew into new theories and new institutions. It is enough to remark that these new tendencies gained ground only by hairs' breadths, and against the stubborn opposition of the traditionalists. A classic instance of this will be cited later. We start with the historical fact of "particularism."

In a general way "particularism" in Germany was analogous with "state sovereignty" in the United States. At the beginning of the period of "particularism" (or, to select a symbolic date, 1555), which was the swing of the pendulum from imperialism of the medieval type to a chaos of the 400 states, varying in size, as we have said, from big farms to principalities of several million souls, the German princes and their advisers began to realize that if the old empire had its faults the new sovereign principalities had their difficulties.

The problem of bare existence loomed up before each of them. They were plunged into a condition of promiscuous warfare, or incessant danger of warfare. Each state was ready, at a moment's notice, to turn and rend every other. No prince could foresee how long it would be before his present allies would be his enemies. Under these circumstances, the life-and-death question of every state was, How may a government be strong enough to resist other states, and to preserve order among its own people? This question produced the body of social theory known as *cameralism*. It contained germs of all the subsequent social science and governmental practice in Germany.

Scarcely a movement in literature or in practice has flourished during a more definitely definable period. The palmy days of *cameralism* fell between 1555 (publication of Von Osse's *Testament*) and 1765 (publication of first edition of Sonnenfels' work in three volumes: *Grundsätze der Policey, Handlung und Finanz*).

Cameralism was the teaching of the cameralists. The cameralists were the experts in the theory or the practice of the Kammer. The Kammer in the first technical use was the princely treasury. Then its meaning widened until it included all the departments of government with their subordinate bureaus. On the other hand, the word Kammer is still current in its homely original significance, i.e., to the middle-class city *Hausfrau* it means the storeroom, while on the farms it is equivalent to the different meanings of the English and New English word "buttery."

To represent the position of the cameralists after the style of some of their own writings: As the treasury is the heart or the stomach of the state, so the cameralists and cameralism became presently the theorists and the theory of every part of civic life.

They and it occupied this position till 1765 and, with transformations, they have retained much of their influence until the present moment.<sup>1</sup>

The cameralists started with the question formulated above, How may a government be strong enough, etc.? And their answer was: By having the ready means to pay expenses. Therefore, the central question of cameralism became, How may states secure a sufficient supply of ready means, i.e., money?

It is easy enough to see now that this was essentially more an economic than a political question, but to the men of that time it appeared rather exclusively in the light of an administrative matter. For this reason political economy, as we understand the term now, did not make its appearance in Germany until nearly fifty years after Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was published in England (1776). All this time the center of attention in Germany remained within the problem of securing public revenues, rather than in connection with problems of the industries from which revenues must be ultimately derived.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Until recently, and perhaps at the present time, students of law in Prussian universities were officially designated as "Stud. jur. et Kam." (Wever).

<sup>2</sup> No history of political economy has given due credit to this fact. Whenever the historians have referred to the cameralists at all they have talked about them as though

From the close of the cameralistic period proper (1765) to the formulation of economic problems in a fundamental sense (Adam Smith, 1776; Rau, 1823) the European mind in general was too much agitated to be capable of the formation of permanent policies, or even of very generally convincing theories. There was no consensus, as there had been in the cameralistic period, about a central problem around which all other problems must gather, or from which all other problems must take their departure. It was a period of political and intellectual opportunism, with mighty little available opportunity at that. The mental attitude of academic men as a rule was correspondingly uncertain. No longer was there, as in the cameralistic period, a concentration upon one dominating public purpose. The social theorizings of the period (1765-1823) are either on particular technical problems of a very concrete sort, or they are of a sort that begins nowhere and ends nowhere, except in an irresponsible opinionativeness of the particular writers. No one seemed to have a common point of departure with anyone else. No one had a visible goal or a respectable program or method.

Chief among the reasons for this state of things was the absence of settled social purposes in general. The whole social horizon was befogged, and the time was not ripe for adoption of determined social programs adapted to the new circumstances and the new interests. Thinking did not start anywhere and it did not get anywhere. That is, there was no rallying around such a theoretical and practical question, as for example, What is national prosperity, and how may it be gained? Perhaps we are now in a period of similar impotence, instead of rallying around such a crucial problem as: What is

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they had proposed the same problems which interested nineteenth-century economists. They were not consciously concerned with the later types of economic problems. What they were concerned with was the radical question from the standpoint of their princely masters: How may governments get the money that the people acquire? Of course, this question might be answered over and over again in the form of programs which temporarily provided for governmental needs, yet possibly in utter defiance of comprehensive principles of political economy. In other words, cameralism was an economy of political expediency, not of national wealth.

representative government, or what is national prosperity, and how may it be gained?

Returning now to the prevailing style of thought about public questions during the cameralistic period (1555-1765) the major premise of the cameralistic theory was that *the welfare of the state is the supreme concern*. We must guard, in the first place, however, against attaching any modern conceptions whatever to the phrase "the welfare of the state." The state at first meant the government, and the government at first meant the prince. The idea, the welfare of the state, meant to the early cameralists simply and solely the ability of the prince to exercise resistless control over his subjects, and to carry on successful war. Further variations of the idea from modern conceptions will be noted later.

This cameralistic conception of the essential political good was collectivistic philosophy in a special form, and this presumption that the interests of the government are foremost, while the interests of the subject individual are incidental, has always remained the major premise of all departments of German social science and civic art. Thus it has come about that all questions of political progress or of social progress in general in Germany have always been asked by the Germans virtually in this form: Without disturbing public order, what additions are possible to individual freedom? In contrast with this, all questions of political progress, or social progress in general in the United States have always been asked by the Americans in virtually this form: Without diminishing individual freedom, what additions are possible to public order? In this contrast we have the key to a large part of the difference between the two civilizations.

In cameralistic theory the prince figures as the repository of power over territory and people. His first and chief concern is to retain this power against the aggressions of other princes. His second interest is to increase this power by aggressing upon other princes.



The minor premise of early cameralism was: *Money to pay for maintaining internal peace and defensive or aggressive war is the chief assurance of the welfare of the prince.*

The conclusion was: *Therefore the science of getting money for the state is the foundation of the welfare of the state.*

In this formula, as used by the cameralists, the word science had precisely the meaning with which it was almost uniformly used by all the social theorists in Germany up to the end of the eighteenth century, i.e., it was first and foremost synonymous with "art." Indeed the words *Wissenschaft* and *Kunst* often occurred in the same immediate context as variations of each other. The word "science" in this connection is shown by usage throughout the cameralistic writings to have been best rendered by our word "knack," illustrated by such colloquial and facetious uses of the English word "science" as when the performer of some athletic or sleight-of-hand stunt or the man who makes a scratch in billiards facetiously remarks: "That's science!" Then the meaning grew up to the later and more dignified conceptions corresponding to the term "technique." All the while, of course, there crept in some tendencies to include in the term more and more references to considerations approaching the rank of fundamental science. These modifications were subordinate to the superficial and utilitarian sense of the word until well along in the nineteenth century.

The beginning of German social science in general then, and of political science in particular, was fiscal science, or ways and means of supplying the public treasury. The evolution of cameralistic theory in its earlier stages may be understood by means of an analogy. The early German rulers were in very much the state of mind of early American railroad men. The foresight of the latter did not go beyond getting the highest rates possible for passengers and freight. It occurred to few of them that developing population and industries along the line of the roads would ever be a part of the railroad business. Early fiscal science in Germany was in like

manner a program of extracting as much revenue as possible from the subjects, without thought of going back to problems of increasing the total population, or of raising the level of popular prosperity. This science was, therefore, not economic in the proper sense. As we have seen, it was merely administrative.

As early as 1686, however, a daring innovator (Schroeder) startled the traditional theorists by launching into cameralism the heretical theorem, "No rich prince without a rich people."<sup>1</sup> More fully expressed, the idea was that wisdom required the prince to turn his administrative forces to the task of promoting the prosperity of the people, instead of remaining satisfied with allowing his tax-gatherers to continue the (for them) lucrative practice of squeezing out of the people all that force could collect. The suggestion gave its author precisely the opposite reputation in the later cameralistic writings from that which he deserves. He was pounced upon by the representatives of the prevailing régime as an enemy of the state. He was actually one of the earliest enemies of the tax-gathering parasites upon the state, and they succeeded in passing his name along in history besmirched by their defamations. He was simply among the earliest Germans to see that a revenue system which fitted better in a Turkish than in a Christian state was at the same time in the long run a mistake from the standpoint of governmental expediency. From this time on then (1686), the idea of the welfare of the *people* was visibly struggling for adjustment with the older idea, viz., the welfare of the *prince* or of the *state*. Corresponding with this idea, a second division of government had begun to be talked about; or more precisely a branch of administration which dated back to Roman times began to be talked about in a new way, or the idea began to be mooted of enlarging the scope of an old administrative agency. In German theory and practice this agency was known as *Policey*. Running through its gamut of usage, this term and this agency, which later became omnipresent in Germany, meant a heterogeneity of things, ranging between the

<sup>1</sup> Small, *The Cameralists*, p. 152.

two extremes "police" and "polity," which Americans of today would understand best if referred to as a "Department of Public Welfare." Cameralistic theory incessantly varied its classifications and correlations under the head *Policey*, and never got them into shape in which they could be stabilized in accordance with very penetrating social principles. In operation, however, during the cameralistic period proper, *Policey* from time to time dealt with everything, from superintending the rotation of crops to regulating the church and the universities, in so far as such intervention was held to be for the interest of the state.

When the cameralistic system had reached its most mature form (1765), it was subdivided into three main parts. If we remember that this subdivision was dictated by supposed administrative convenience, rather than by what we should now call scientific considerations, some of its confusions are accounted for.

Sonnenfels treats these divisions in the following order:<sup>1</sup>

1. *Policey*, described as "the science of founding and maintaining the internal security of the state."

How vague the conception of *Policey* was at this time, may be seen from Sonnenfels' explanation in this immediate connection (p. 505) that he frequently uses the words *Policey* and *Gesetzgebung* as synonymous.

2. *Handlung*.—This subdivision was the most immediate root of German "national economy" in the modern sense. It is nowhere strictly defined, and it could not be in a clear-cut way, because it was not a category which accurately corresponded with facts. The literal equivalent of the term *Handlung* is *commerce*. The French book which Sonnenfels seems to have regarded as the highest authority on the subject is Melon, *Essai politique sur le commerce* (1734). Yet Sonnenfels describes *Handlung* as "the science by which the largest number of people may be supplied with occupation."<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, chapter i of Sonnenfels' volume on *Handlung* treats of rural management (*Landwirtschaft*) (p. 544); chapter ii

<sup>1</sup> See Small, *ibid.*, p. 505, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 531.

deals with manufactures; chapter iii, foreign commerce; chapter iv, colonies; chapter v, land carriage; chapter vi, water carriage; chapter vii, insurance; chapter viii, money. In all this, there was an approach to the sort of inquiry into the relations of cause and effect in economic occupations which became the substance of nineteenth-century political economy. The point of view from which all these questions were approached, however, is indicated by the fundamental question: What sort of regulation of all these occupations should government maintain, in order to have the means of replenishing its treasury?

3. *Finance*.—The general nature of finance as fiscal science, in the aspects which made primary appeal to the cameralists, has already been indicated.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PERIOD OF RETARDED DEVELOPMENT IN GERMAN SOCIAL SCIENCE

The first thing to keep in mind in the period following the cameralists is that the whole political philosophy of quasi-absolutism and of collectivism was coming to trial. On the one hand the physiocrats in France, and on the other hand the English "liberalists," whom we may symbolize by the name of Adam Smith, were not merely demanding a change of policy for states. Their demands amounted to impeachments of the fundamental German conception of a state.<sup>1</sup>

Each of these theories confronted the collectivistic, paternalistic German states with the proclamation: *No such thing has a right to exist as a state which acts for individuals, instead of stopping when it has made individuals secure in acting for themselves.*

Not only were Germans asked to revolutionize their inborn ingrained conceptions of the state, but they were asked to exchange all their provincialisms and race-consciousness for a cosmopolitanism far beyond the dreams of any judicial mind even at this much later day. A theory was proposed which would not only require German states to resign all their initiative, but it would require Saxons to care no more for Saxons, and Bavarians no more for Bavarians, and Prussians no more for Prussians, than they cared for Dutchmen or Frenchmen or Englishmen. It was a theory which, supposing quasi-absolutism had been cast off in favor of republicanism, would have forbidden free Prussians to combine to secure advantages for

<sup>1</sup>The name of Quesnay, who wrote in 1758, has been advertised much more widely than his importance merits, as the spokesman of the physiocratic doctrine. Unless I have overlooked some instance, Sonnenfels does not mention Quesnay even in his edition of 1785. He refers to "Die Oekonomisten, ein Zweig der Encyclopedisten," later called "physiocrats." See Small, *The Cameralists*, p. 555.



themselves which Englishmen or Frenchmen or Russians might otherwise take from them. In short, as a doctrine of the state, the so-called "liberalism" was revolutionary. As a doctrine of individuals, considered as freed from the states, it was a counsel of perfection.

We may get this situation clearly before our minds without prejudging either quasi-absolutism or collectivism or liberalism. Assuming that there was a case both for and against each of those doctrines or systems, the point is that physiocracy and Smithism called on Germany to reverse its traditional judgments upon more cardinal questions at once than ordinary minds could settle in many generations. In the retrospect we may easily put these agitating questions in a logical order, and show how, as an academic proposition, they might have been treated in turn. Arranged then in the order of their generality and logical dependence, the problems were these: First, Shall the German peoples plan to live as pro rata parts of the whole world, or shall they pursue their traditional policy of looking out for themselves first, expecting their neighbors to do likewise? Second, Shall the German peoples conclude that they can carry out the decision of this question best under governments which plan and execute as tutors and guardians of the citizens, or under governments which merely take the orders of citizens, who in their turn mostly plan and execute for themselves? Third, Assuming a decision of problems one and two, is the doctrine of the physiocrats, or of the English liberalists, the last word of political wisdom?

Confused beyond recognition by the circumstances of the time, these three distinct questions were actually forcing themselves into the field of practical politics, as well as of academic discussion, say after 1765. But no one was able to analyze these questions into their simplest parts. Even if they could have been met in turn on their separate merits, they would have been baffling enough. In fact, they were so jumbled that the thinkers could not be sure which of these questions they were considering most; and

it remains a first-rate historical problem to disentangle the complications which involved all the threads of the puzzle in a snarl that logic could not straighten out. Generations of advance in knowledge, technique, sentiment, and the force of contending interests have meanwhile rearranged German judgments, and reassorted opinions; but no system of thinking which covers the whole ground of these problems has even yet been able to command a very general consensus, either in Germany or elsewhere. The evolution of the social sciences in Germany was an incident, then, of the settling of choices with respect to these alternatives: (1) The sort of state we are used to (particularism) or a new brand of world-citizenship? (2) The sort of ways and means we are used to, governmental in particular; or a reversal of our judgments about the policy best calculated to gain civic ends? (3) Treatment of the answer to either of these questions as a solution for all times and places, or as temporary and tentative adjustment to conditions which vary with time and place?

There is much pathos in the whole history, because the wisest men seem to have had no more than the most confused half-consciousness of these distinct factors in the practical and theoretical problem. Their theorizings were consequently all more or less wide of the main questions, and each theorist was more or less cloudy about the actual ratio of weight which he was allowing to each of the undifferentiated factors that actually entered into his composite standard of judgment.

It would be utterly unhistorical to expect anything different. Experience must first have deposited greatly modified valuations in the minds of German thinkers, before they could entertain, even as academic abstractions, the types of questions into which we have analyzed the problems then pressing for solution. Academic work upon inadequately formulated aspects of these problems was probably not the most important part of the experience which ultimately presented scientific questions in more realistic shapes. The more important phases of experience, leading up to reorganized

social science, were probably the changes in the external conditions of European peoples, the outbreak of pent-up popular energies in France, the consequent intensification of international hatreds, the wars, and the resulting changes in the European balance of power, not merely political, but in all ranges of life. For the purpose of the present survey all these changes have to be taken for granted; but we now approach more closely the problem of analyzing the intellectual process within the range of the social sciences, which went on in touch with these external revolutions, through which new controlling purposes and practices were suggested to the minds of all the social theorists.

A single further observation should preface our next subject, viz.: One might read all the histories of political economy that have appeared up to date without getting hold of the foregoing clue. It is a clue which throws a flood of light upon means of discriminating between significant and insignificant authors.

Thus Roscher, *National-Oekonomie in Deutschland* (1874) has certain introductions to portions of his work which emphasize the relations between public activities and academic theories; but presently he loses hold of this clue and strings out dismally inconsequential accounts of this, that, or the other writer's opinions on economic subjects; large portions of which opinions are, so far as we can see, to such a degree detached from the main movement of affairs that they were of only trifling importance.<sup>1</sup>

There is no exhaustive explanation extant thus far of the chain and system of causes and effects which formed the transition from the "cameralistic science" of the period 1555-1765 in Germany to that methodology which has worked out German social science in its present form and content. The present argument urges no claim to have solved the problem. Indeed, it is all too evident that the problem has not been solved. The most that the present survey

<sup>1</sup> So also Cossa, *Guide to the Study of Political Economy* (1st ed., Orig. Italian, 1876; 2d ed., 1878). Again, Ingram, article "Political Economy," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (9th ed., 1885), also in separate book form. Ingram seems to have taken most of his point of view and information about German economists from Roscher.

attempts is a general exhibit of some of the more obvious activities which entered into this development. Among several of the most effective, it would be unwise to venture a judgment about relative importance. Let it be enough at present to detect certain important antecedents and factors in the tremendous process, without presuming to assign to them either the precise functional agency which they actually exerted, or the exact ratio of influence with which each should be credited. Enough that we can make out significant elements in the process, and therewith certain outstanding results of the process, more especially certain deposits of the process, in the way of clue ideas, which were later taken up by the sociologists as challenges to investigation in directions which had not been followed by the older types of social scientists.

Although it will tend to confuse the chronology of the story, let us hope that there will be compensation in a glimpse at the persistence of this cameralistic tradition after it had not only ceased to be vital, but after it had become a serious obstruction of objective science. Every attempt on record, from Socrates down, to escape from customary ways of thinking into more candid appeal to reality, has had to carry a heavy handicap of mental habit. German economic and political theory between 1820 and 1870 illustrated this rule in more ways than one. At this point our emphasis must be on a single one of these embarrassments, viz., the necessity of competing with a degenerate type of cameralism. As we have seen, cameralism was a very definite attempt to solve a concrete problem, viz., how to supply the prince with money, first to preserve order, second to wage war.

After 1765 this purpose ceased to have the relative importance which it had during the previous two hundred years. The theorists were unconsciously cut adrift from their anchorage in that purpose, and for a long time they did not find another purpose to serve as means of correlating their thinking. During this period of drift (1765-1823), there was, on the one hand, a great deal of publication resembling the old cameralism not at its best but at its worst; and

on the other hand, there were the beginnings of what afterward became systematic political economy.

As a specimen of the first sort of thing, we select from a large number of similar survivals, holdovers from the cameralistic type of doctrine, but not having the virtue of representing what was most vital in the doctrine, a book published in 1835, by Baumstark, Privat-Docent at the University of Heidelberg. The title was *Kameralistische Encyclopädie*. This title was expanded as follows: *Handbuch der Kameralwissenschaften und ihrer Literatur für Rechts- und Verwaltungs-Beamte, Landstände, Gemeinde-Räthe und Kameral-Candidaten*.

Now we are exaggerating a little, but the sort of thing represented by this book may be compared with the sort of publication we are acquainted with under such titles as *Every Man His Own Lawyer*, *Every Man His Own Doctor*, *The Practical Farmer*, *A Thousand Items of Useful Knowledge*, etc., that is, collections of information about ways in which people without much training may do some of the concrete things that are demanded in certain callings. In this case, these things pertain to earning a living in a wide variety of occupations, from quarrying to the duties of clerks in a state treasury. An extract from the Table of Contents will give an idea of topics and treatment.

### I. The general theory of thrift

### II. Special kinds of thrift

#### 1. That of the individual citizen

- a) Signs of the presence of useful minerals and rules for extracting and transforming them
- b) Same for clay, and rules for manufacturing brick
- c) Same for salt works
- d) Same for cultivation of the soil
- e) Same for forestry
- f) Same for horticulture
- g) Same for horse-raising
- h) Same for cattle-raising
- i) Same for swine-raising



- g)* Rules for carrying on trade
- h)* Rules for carrying on different kinds of manufacture
- i)* Rules for carrying on the building industries
- 2. That of the local community
  - a)* How to raise the community income, etc.
- 3. That of the state
  - a)* How to do the business of the different government bureaus

Simply contrast this schedule with the Contents of any modern book on economics!

This sort of thing is Exhibit A in demonstration of the state of frustration and flustration into which much of the thinking in Germany had relapsed as to the whole range of subjects which we now indicate as the field of political science, political economy, and sociology. That is, the central purpose of cameralism in its most efficient days had ceased to be as central as it was when the existence of separate states was more precarious. The necessity for making all interests of citizens converge on the task of keeping the state treasury supplied, was no longer so pre-eminent that it could be the organizing principle of social science. But no other central purpose had taken its place. The result was that theorists were selecting their several centers of attention, and were developing their myriad little bids for acceptance as science, to the confusion rather than to the promotion of scientific thinking. Men of Baumstark's type were literally unable to see the forest for the trees, the town for the houses. They made out in practical life an almost endless list of subjects that someone must attend to. They collected masses of information about wisdom which experience had taught as to ways of conducting these practical affairs. All this was well enough in itself, but it tended rather away from organization of economic thinking than toward it. Only the faintest gleams of perception could enter anyone's mind from these catalogues of craft rules to the effect that one craft depends on another, and that they all make up or fail to make up an interacting system which must have a policy as a whole, and must be understood and esti-

mated as a whole, in order to be intelligently operated. To illustrate the vacuity and turgidity of thinking that was harbored in German universities at the middle of the nineteenth century, the following extracts are added.

In his Preface Baumstark says:

In such eminently practical matters as the cameralistic specialties, which draw from experience, and in connection with which one might almost wish that in a certain sense there were no such thing as science, it is not practicable, as in philosophy to exhibit, more or less clearly, every few years a distinct system, and the good God did very well in arranging it so.

Hence the author may not hope for enthusiastic applause. It is at this point a merit if one is able to consolidate science in a good spirit. The testimonial which it has been possible to give to cameralistic pursuits in this respect is by no means as brilliant as many might believe. The really capable minds among those devoted to cameralistics are much more rare, at least in South Germany, than in any other branch of science, theology excepted. This is due in part to the not yet extinct prejudice that the students of mediocre standing are always good enough to make cameralists out of; and in part to the fact that cameral science lends itself easier than any other to perfunctory treatment; but, especially in its political part, it is more difficult and more intellectual than any other except history. Under such circumstances there is unfortunately far less chance for a philosophical, classical and historical training before the beginning of cameralistic studies than in the case of any other specialty, medicine included. Unfortunately this tendency finds more and more support in the very manner in which cameral science is treated. For nothing appeals more to the type of people who devote themselves to cameralistics than empty word-cramming; and they find this sort of pabulum to their full taste in so-called general economic theory, commercial science, national economy and financial science. We have reached such a condition that we cannot pass judgment on another's opinion, or refute it, without first quarrelling about a lot of definitions. We quarrel and quarrel, until at last we forget what the quarrel was all about, and we separate without arriving anywhere. Since a Cyclopaedia least of all can exist without exhibiting this anarchy of ideas, many passages in the present book must unfortunately be stuffed with them. Recently indeed, men have resumed the easy going old-fashioned method, as in the philosophy of law, of deriving economic principles from definitions, rather than from history and life, and they think in this way to give a special impetus to science, and even to life, since otherwise an Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, Ricardo, etc., cannot be understood. And the direct

opposites of these men in tendency, namely the political innovators, who belong with the unphilosophical political philosophers, quite heartily join in this chorus, because they are of the opinion that states have become more fortunate since, and for the reason that, men have begun to quarrel about the conception of the state, which<sup>1</sup> seems to be the ovary<sup>2</sup> of all practical civic institutions. Finally, what shall we think, when, as in the year 1831, we must read the charge brought in all seriousness against Say's celebrated book, that it contains only a number of examples drawn from practical life, but few rules, which the reader must rather abstract for himself, if he passes from analysis to synthesis?

That is, these cameralists who had lost the old bearings, and had not made out new ones, felt that it was meritorious to speak with contempt of the men who were trying to make general surveys of economic phenomena, and to set up landmarks which would help everyone to understand what his particular activities have to do with the connected body of activities carried on by the community as a whole.

That neither of these two kinds of people understood the other very well at the time, that they had something more in common than they could reconcile with their partial insight, appears a little later in the same Preface, when Baumstark goes on to eulogize the very men whom he had just sneered at others for imitating. He says (p. viii):

On the other hand . . . . I want to put emphasis on the fact that I have included the economies of communities as an intermediate member in cameral science, and I have tried to put it on a secure basis; something which so far as my knowledge goes, no one has done before me. Also I may be permitted especially to emphasize that I have subjected to revision a considerable number of politico-economic and financial doctrines. By both of these facts I would bear witness that I am devoted to the promotion of the essentials of science. Yet there is special need of securing a historical foundation for the political part of our science, for without it the science will run into the most dangerous by-paths. I do not mean by this that a paltry historical introduction, in the shape of a few dates and cold statistics, should be given to every doctrine of financial science. I mean rather that the whole theory of public economy in its correlation should be put upon an historical basis, instead of being left in the shape of dogmatism; and that it should be developed throughout as a

<sup>1</sup> I.e., *Begriff* or state?

<sup>2</sup> *Eierstock*.

result of investigations in the history of commerce, of civilization, of the state and of humanity. What stability, what a practical nucleus the great Spittler [1752-1810]<sup>1</sup> thereby gave to his lectures on politics, and what vitality and spirituality does politics present when so treated! What energy Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson in the same way breathed into their deathless works!<sup>2</sup>

But at this point also we see the halfway character of the zeal and scholarship of our young cameralists. While books like those of the men named, and that of Ricardo, deserve a permanent place on the study table, those who are willing to read them are extremely rare, and it is regarded as an incomprehensible supposition that any one should learn the smattering of English necessary to understand them.

Then follows a paragraph which illustrates what we have said before, that throughout the nineteenth century at least, while students of different phases of human relations were groping their way out of darkness into light, they had a way of keeping each other's torches in sight, so that in effect the search was less solitary and specialized, and more co-operative, than in other countries, viz.:

Finally, I regard it as my duty . . . to explain, that it would be quite contrary to my wishes, if the fact that I have not connected a political treatise with this cameralistic textbook should be taken to mean that I am among those who forget that the state embraces other purposes besides the economic, the financial and the industrial. I do not want to make this cyclopaedia a promoter of our science in such a way that it will try to be the only hen permitted to hatch a brood. On the contrary, in my opinion no civic question, the economic and financial included, can be correctly solved without precise consideration of all the political relationships. Hence I expressly call the attention of my readers to the fact that they must pursue political science step by step with cameralistics, and that they must restrain themselves from applying to the state, out of hand, scientific theorems simply because they are true. In my opinion the training of cameralists in our universities, at least in South Germany, so far as state examinations are influential upon it, is quite mistaken and one sided. In politics no examination is given at all. Consequently students merely register for lectures on constitutional law, or international

<sup>1</sup> *Vorlesungen über Politik*, printed in 1828. Good type of transition-era thinking with tendencies toward the methods later known as of the "historical school of economics."

<sup>2</sup> As I hinted before, there seems to be a curious instability of attitude when this remark is compared with the sneers above at some of the followers of Adam Smith.

law, etc. because it happens to be in the system, or to be prescribed, but they never think of making a study of these subjects! On the other hand, at the university, lectures are heard on mining, agricultural and forest economy, and technology, which cannot be a hair more than mere half-studies, because time and means are both lacking there for thorough pursuit of these subjects, even supposing the teacher were a practical scientist. When they present themselves for the state examination, the candidates are asked certain theoretical questions about these pursuits, but they are put to no practical test in any of them, yet they are appointed to positions. In that way can anything better be expected than the one sidedness of which I have spoken? Why are not practically trained men appointed to the civil positions which are directly connected with these practical occupations? And why are the candidates for cameralistic positions not thoroughly tested in the political subjects, since the lectures on trades in the universities are scarcely more than theoretical encyclopaedias? And why, finally, are these latter not assigned to the polytechnic schools, as has occurred in the case of training for the building departments?

It will be seen then that, in spite of these views, I was free to write a cameralistic encyclopaedia; but I repeat that the prejudice must gradually be overcome that the training and testing of civic officials must conform to the scientific systems. On the contrary, they should be trained according to the demands of the practical needs.<sup>1</sup> Moreover I fail to see why everything that, in life, is in a certain connection should also have the same connection in the system. We can all feel to what that would lead. Life would become systematic, but the system would by no means become vital.

On the whole then, men of the Baumstark type represented an emphasis upon technical rules, for concrete purposes. Their method had courteous and appreciative things to say about the idea of connecting up different phases of life with one another, but in practice it was a line-upon-line inculcation of a routine that tended to indifference toward all things else except that routine. To the end of time this tendency may have its exponents. At least it has had enough of them down to the present. At the same time, however, the opposite tendency has steadily gained volume.

On the other hand, it is one of the frequent surprises of literary and scientific history that books occasionally appear which seem

<sup>1</sup> Vocational education!



to be far in advance of their time, or at least to have absorbed very much more of the most enlightened spirit of their time than is in evidence in the more conventional contemporary writings. As an example, we may cite a work in two volumes (respectively xxxii+464, and xlviii+479 pages) published in 1830. The title of the first volume reads as follows: *Versuch eines Systems der National-und Staats-ökonomie, mit vorzüglicher Berichtigung Deutschlands, aus dem Gange der Völkercultur und aus dem praktischen Leben populär entwickelt, Von G. F. Krause, Königl. Preuss. Staatsrath a. D., etc.*

The author expressly disclaims that he or his work is either of, for, or by, the learned class. He offers it as an experienced man's contribution to practical economic philosophy and civic wisdom. In carrying out this purpose he makes a clearer distinction than is in evidence up to his time, and perhaps clearer than was observed by later writers, between *National-Oekonomie*, or the principles underlying the economic prosperity of a nation, considered strictly as a community engaged in securing the material well-being of all through supplying their material wants by work; and on the other hand, *Staatswirthschaft*, or *Staats-Oekonomie*, which deals with the theory and practice of governments as such, in their efforts as political agencies to make the output of such labors as easily and amply available as possible for governmental purposes. This distinction has always been more or less beclouded in German economic and political writings, and it has never been strictly observed in England or America. In this respect Krause set an example which might have been followed with profit. In another cardinal respect Krause seems to have anticipated the development of economic method, viz., he actually assigned to past experience a more instructive part in the guidance of ideas about economic conduct than was formulated by the earlier exponents of the so-called "historical school" of German economic theorists. The book seems to have suffered the usual fate of a literary venture by an outsider. It appears to have been regarded as beneath the notice of the academic caste. Roscher,

for example, adopts toward the author a typically lofty tone.<sup>1</sup> Quite characteristically, too, Roscher treats Krause's opinions about details as more significant than his postulates of method. On the contrary, we need not consider Krause's views about details, either of theory or of practice. He is worth remembering rather as an index of a main current of thought which was setting in the direction of more objective social science.

<sup>1</sup> *National-Oekonomie in Deutschland*, p. 942. Cf. the later passage, p. 1008, which unconsciously indicates the more direct relation of Krause to development of the sociological idea.

## CHAPTER X

### THE TRANSITION TO SYSTEMATIC POLITICAL ECONOMY IN GERMANY<sup>1</sup>

It is a puzzle to decide whether the development of method in the social sciences can be made plainest by taking up the economic or the political factor following the outline of historical method. Sometimes the one alternative seems preferable, sometimes the other. In the present argument the economists are to be treated first. It must be understood that this is merely a matter of uncertain convenience in reporting; a way of telling a complex story so that its different parts will be as distinct as they can be made. On the other hand, it must be repeated that these movements were approximately simultaneous in the divisions of social science which we have later partitioned off pretty definitely as history, economics, and political science. The first three quarters of the nineteenth century were a period in which German scholars in each of these divisions of labor were trying to get their ideas settled about how to work most intelligently. We shall not enter into a detailed analysis of different German economic writers. There is one outstanding fact which should be impressed, whether anything else in this section carries or not, viz., that in the economic field the Germans were engaged in the experiment of trying to make the water of Adam Smith's individualism mix with the oil of German collectivism. We do not use the metaphors invidiously in either direction. To adopt another figure, the German economic theorists attempted after 1800 to make an exotic economic plant grow on Teutonic soil. As we have seen, the Germans in their particularistic states had been schooling themselves in nationalistic theory and practice for centuries. About 1765 the cameralistic fiscal center for all social

<sup>1</sup> See *Encyc. Amer.*, title "Sociology," p. 210.

problems ceased to be as strategic for German theorists as it had been. But no new center was in sight. While groping about for a new pole star to guide all social doctrine, if another figure may be substituted, the Germans became the willing or unwilling pupils of the British classical economic school. They did not content themselves with studying English books. They wrote hundreds of books of their own, following out English suggestions. They tried their best to be satisfied with thinking in the English way. They did a great deal to sharpen ideas that had their origin in England. They developed some important variations of their own to which we shall refer presently, but after all, the period from 1820 to 1870 was essentially a period of departure from the ways of German impulse; and in principle the Germans, a little after 1870, abandoned the attempt to domesticate the type of economic theory to which they had given the most patient attention. The upshot of this whole experience, so far as scientific method is concerned, may be reduced to this formula: It took the Germans from 1765 to 1870 to reach the fundamental conclusion that human relations in connection with wealth cannot be truly stated in terms of individuals. They can be understood only when interpreted as moral or social. Our effort will be, then, not to exhibit the incidents which led to this conclusion, but merely to bring the conclusion itself into a somewhat clearer light.

Every candid inquiry into reality turns out sooner or later to have been a schooling in scientific method. Opinion may be almost wholly irresponsible. It may be chiefly an expression of feeling, or surmise or self-interest. Thus it was easy for the slave-owning stratum in Greece to form a constituency for the opinion that slavery is given in the order of nature, and is to be looked upon as a permanent feature in human society. So of every stratum near the throne, and their opinions about "divine right." So of any propertied class, and their opinions about the justice of the particular property institutions which confer their status. So of any aristocracy of political or ecclesiastical or social privilege. Its typical

theorists construe the world as committed to the permanence of that accident.

So soon as opinion is subjected to the test of evidence, the accountability of opinion to reality begins to appear. Theorists begin to discover that it is useless to construct a subjective world unless it is a faithful reflex of the objective world. They do not discover this all at once. They get at it bit by bit. Nobody has fully discovered it yet. Schooling in candid inspection of reality is teaching the lesson to thousands of specialists in hundreds of specialties. They are scattering the discovery abroad, and exchanging illustrations of the ways in which it is exemplified in their respective fields, and thus preparing minds for reception of the generalization that conformity to reality must be the test of theory about any part of human experience.

The traditional histories of economic theory have very imperfectly reflected the foregoing view. As a rule they have amounted to digests merely of the opinions of writers, arranged in chronological order, upon different phases of pecuniary relations which interested them. Usually these opinions are reported in such a way that the student is left to his own devices to find out how the different theorists arrived at their opinions. This latter, however, is of much greater permanent importance than the opinions themselves. For example, one economist believes in "protection," another in "free trade"; one economist believes in high taxation on land, another in high taxation upon profits. Either of these opinions has weight for scientific purposes in proportion to the validity of the preconceptions and the operative factors brought into consideration in arriving at the opinions. As the mere opinion of a single theorist, an economic doctrine may have no weight whatever, because in that particular instance the doctrine may be merely the dictum of a man who does not know how to support it by competent reasons. The same economic doctrine may be entitled to respect when it is sanctioned by due reference to all that can be ascertained of the relations to which the doctrine must be applied.



Our sociological interest, therefore, in the growth of economic theory, pivots upon those phases of economic theory which have to do with the relations of cause and effect between men's behavior, primarily with reference to the wealth interest, and ultimately with reference to all other divisions of their behavior. Otherwise expressed, the development of economic theory is of interest to sociologists first and foremost in so far as it exhibits growth of realization that men's pecuniary activities must be understood, and evaluated and at last controlled as incidental to and constituent of all the activities which compose the human process. In the degree in which method in economic inquiry has consciously or unconsciously respected this element in the human situation, it has shaped a technique of research which has become a part of the outfit of social science in general, and especially a part of the reserve upon which the sociologists must depend for support of their own findings.

Our aim, then, in the following section is to indicate some of the more outstanding features in the advance of German economic theory: from relatively subjective interpretation of economic relations to an objectivity in treatment of economic groups which for some time served as a standard of objectivity in analysis of human groups in general.

As we have pointed out, German economic theory from 1820 to 1870 was predominantly an attempt to transplant English "classical" economics to German soil. In some respects it is easier for Americans to learn all that the Germans learned about economic methodology up to 1850 from British than from German theorists. After 1850, and more particularly after 1870, the Germans introduced variants into economic theory which are of cardinal value for economics, for sociology, and for social science in general. These same variants have not yet had their share of influence upon British theory. We shall consequently take our indexes of progress in method more from German than from British or French developments. We begin, however, with the theorist who

by common consent has come to be regarded as the chief monument of the transition from unsystematic to scientific treatment of economic phenomena.

#### ADAM SMITH AND THE WEALTH OF NATIONS

This portion of the survey might well take, as its point of departure, chapter iii in MacLeod's *History of Economics*, published in 1896. The passage is not only a vigorous impeachment of the traditional claims for Adam Smith, and a plea for recognition of the physiocrats, but it is an impassioned defense of John Law as an economist.

The reference is made to MacLeod's argument for a variety of reasons. First of all it affords another occasion for repeating the explanation that we are not engaged in an effort to determine ratios of merit to individuals for work which in every instance was promoted by conscious or unconscious co-operation. Whether Adam Smith or Quesnay or Rau or someone else added the largest increment to the drive toward objectivity in economic theory is not our question. We know that such problems are insoluble. If they were not, if we imagine ourselves in possession of a precise scale of credits due to each of the men throughout the generations and centuries who did something toward forwarding the movement toward objectivity in their respective lines, even this illuminating knowledge would still be aside from the center of our interest. We want to know about the methodology itself which these men assisted in elaborating. For the express purpose of guarding against diversion into the comparatively irrelevant, we use each and all of the illustrative men in our survey, not in terms of their deserts among their colleagues in the same division of labor, but in terms of the significance of the evolving methods of that division of labor for social science in general and for sociology in particular.

In the second place, we take the opportunity to repeat the other explanation, that we are not attempting even to outline a general history of social science, nor even of sociology. We are illustrating

the fact that sociology is a continuation and differentiation of procedures which developed up to a certain point in the older divisions of social science. We are taking our particulars largely from Germany, because the pertinent facts are more accessible there than elsewhere. No more than in the case of individuals are we asserting or implying that the influence of scholars of one nationality has been more important than that of their colleagues in another nation. Whatever may be true about that, even if the truth could be established, it again would be aside from our center of interest. We are trying to point out how criteria of objectivity in social science became increasingly exacting, and we are not trying to prove, contrary to notorious fact, that this increase in precision was the monopoly of a single nation. On the contrary, this drive toward objectivity may be traced in each of the leading nations of Europe. On the other hand, it would be difficult to make out very decisive influences upon the differentiation of sociology in the United States except in the case of England, France, and Germany. Since, as we shall see later, the influence of Germany, as a matter of fact, was more evident in the launching of the sociological movement in the United States, historical truth, as well as convenience of exposition, is served by our selection of the German line of succession as our center of attention.

Lastly, MacLeod's epitome of the Natural Rights doctrine is an excellent piece of material for application of the case method in comparing physiocratic with sociological procedure. The digest will be put to that use later.

For brevity then we adopt the fairly accurate tradition that Adam Smith first put the generalizing tendency in economics into a form that held the attention of followers as a persistent and recognized cult. One of his editors (Bax) says (I, xxxii): "In 1776 the first edition of the *Wealth of Nations* was published, and with it scientific political economy first came into existence." This is an exaggeration, but it is convenient to take Adam Smith as the thinker in whom it is easy to recognize the actual arrival of

conscious endeavor to bring economic phenomena within the compass of a schematic formulation. His method was precisely opposite to that of technicians or encyclopedists of the type of Baumstark. He did not collate rules. He elaborated principles. Smith's work was organized as an attempt to answer five cardinal questions. Each of these questions indicates the subject of inquiry for a main division of the work, viz.:

BOOK I.—What are the causes of improvement in the productive powers of human labor, and what is the order according to which its produce is naturally distributed among the different ranks and conditions of men?

BOOK II.—What is the nature of capital stock, and what is the manner in which it is accumulated, and how do the different ways in which it is employed affect the quantities of labor which it puts into motion?

BOOK III.—Why has the policy of modern states inclined to foster industrial or town arts more than agricultural or rural arts?<sup>1</sup>

BOOK IV.—Why have different theories of political economy been held, and what effects have they produced upon different ages and nations?<sup>2</sup>

BOOK V.—*First*, What are the necessary expenses of the sovereign or commonwealth; which of those expenses ought to be defrayed by the general contribution of the whole society; and which of them by that of some particular part only, or of some particular members of it?

*Second*, What are the different methods in which the whole society may be made to contribute towards defraying the expenses incumbent on the whole society, and what are the principal advantages and inconveniences of each of these methods;

*Third*, What are the reasons and causes which have induced almost all modern governments to mortgage some part of this revenue, or to contract debts and what have been the effects of those debts upon the real wealth, the annual produce of the land and labor of the society?<sup>3</sup>

All this opens up big questions, and demands big and thorough thought processes to arrive at answers.

Of his own conception of the scope of political economy, Smith says:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to later classification these three books constitute what would generally be called Smith's economic theory proper.

<sup>2</sup> An excursion into the field of the history of thought, and of economic thought in particular.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 2-4. Book V is an essay in political philosophy and political science.

<sup>4</sup> Introd. to Book IV.

Political economy, *considered as a branch of the science of a statesman or legislator*, proposes two distinct objects; first, to provide a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the peoples, or more properly to enable them to provide such a revenue or subsistence for themselves; and secondly, to supply the state or commonwealth with a revenue sufficient for the public services. It proposes to enrich both the people and the sovereign.

Of Adam Smith's work in general it must be said:

*First.* Although successors in his school of thought treated different subjects named or involved in this survey in very different forms, by methods and with proportions varying from those assigned to them in Smith's work, English political economy ever since his time has kept in view something like Smith's range of vision as contemplating the body of relationships which must be explained by economic theory.

*Second.* Debate is possible over the question whether Smith really meant to apply the term Political Economy as it came to be applied later by his own school. It would consequently be easy to maintain the thesis that Smith meant by Political Economy, *practical politics or practical fiscal science*, based upon due consideration of the elementary wealth-relationships treated in Books I-III. This, however, is a problem which our present purpose does not require us to discuss. Our main proposition is that the lure which Smith's book exerted, especially upon the Germans, lay first of all in its character as a system, per se, regardless of its content, i.e., as some sort of organization of knowledge in place of the previous confusion.

*Third.* Whether the truth is as suggested in the previous paragraph or not, there is a curious anomaly in the structure of Smith's work. His whole system has been understood by the English as "the system of natural liberty." In a word, it centers upon demand for removal of governmental intervention in economic affairs. Its spirit was afterward symbolized by the phrases *laissez faire, laissez passez*.<sup>1</sup> Books IV and V, however, focus

<sup>1</sup> In Germany the Smithian system was more commonly referred to as the *labor* theory, but we shall say more of that later.



attention on the question, *What should be the policies, in accordance with which governments should control?* This is a naïve confession of judgment. It virtually abandons the major premise of the argument. It takes for granted that government should control somehow; and so long as that substitute major premise is retained, the laissez faire doctrine can mean only, not that there should be literally no governmental control, but that the control shall be of the sort which best pleases the parties in power. Accordingly Book V plainly goes upon an assumption contrary to laissez faire in its literal sense, i.e., it assumes governmental competence to decide how public revenues should be levied and collected in the public interest.

*Fourth.* The fatal illogic in Smith's system, looked at in the largest perspective now within our range of vision, is that it virtually took British industrial society of Smith's own time as the last word in economic organization, and consequently in economic reason. Of course, there are plenty of details in Smith's thinking which seem to contradict this generalization. Taken by and large, however, the formula states the truth. On the whole, Smith assumed that in principle and in practice British industrial institutions represented what must necessarily be permanent and final in economic arrangements everywhere. Being permanent and final, this British economic organization must be right. According to the classical school, therefore, practical economic problems consisted in questions of technique within this supposedly unchangeable economic mold. That is, like most orthodox social theorists down to the present day, Adam Smith could take a historical, genetic, we might almost say, in advance of strict propriety, evolutionary view, of industrial order up to his own time. Adam Smith and the majority of which he is typical could not take a historical, genetic, evolutionary view of his own time, and of the probable future. He could not think of the economic institutions of the Great Britain in which he lived, as merely the economic institutions of a passing moment in the tide of times. He consequently committed one of

the most frequent blunders in theorizing about human affairs, viz.: he treated economic institutions as essentially static from and after the appearance of the presumably permanent ground pattern of economic institutions in British industrial society.<sup>1</sup>

*Fifth.* Quite apart from its particular propositions Smith's book as a whole for a while attracted attention faster in Germany than it did in England.<sup>2</sup> We suspect that this was because any treatise which could be recognized as a system would have been welcomed as a refuge from the sterile litter of thrift and routine precepts assembled by the latter day cameralists. In this sense Smith was the founder of German as well as of English political economy.

*Sixth.* On the other hand, as we have seen, the "natural liberty" element in the Smithian economics was alien to German traditions; yet between 1820 and 1870 the German economists went through a process of trying to convince themselves that their own instincts and acquired traditions of thought about the relations of the state to economic activities were wrong, and that one side of the Smithian conception, viz., the foreordained separation of state and economic activities, was right. Of course this statement does not mean that the German scholars who took their cue from Adam Smith were aware that they were doing what is thus expressed. What they actually did amounted to what we have stated. The process of the development of economic theory in Germany from 1820 to 1870 cannot be explained without keeping in mind this antithesis between German social instincts and practices on the one hand, and on the other the individualistic doctrine which they were trying to assimilate. For the first time, Adam Smith gave them the beginnings of a system of economics as contrasted with cameralistics, which was at best a body of governmental tech-

<sup>1</sup> Of course there is plenty of denial of this, and the proposition must be understood as subject to correction by the fact that the British system, even as Smith conceived it, was in certain details still in the making—the corn laws for example.

<sup>2</sup> Ingram (*Encyc. Brit.*, 9th ed., Vol. XIX, p. 387; separate, p. 184, note) mentions the F. W. Schiller trans. of *Wealth of Nations*, 1776-78; Garve's, 1794, 1799, and 1810; and Asher, 1861.

nology, and which was entering a state of decline in its academic aspects when Smith wrote. It took the Germans a long time to realize that they might develop and improve the system without anchoring themselves to the dogmas carried within the British form of the system. At all events, the development of German economic theory up to 1870 was considerably deflected from its natural course by persistent attempts all through this period to fit the Saul's armor of Smithian "natural liberty" upon the German body of collectivistic proclivities and habits. The result was a half-century devoted to refinement of abstract economic theory, the most of which was scrapped to make way for the revived ethical collectivism which has been dominant in German economic theory since the 1870's.

As we have said elsewhere, we shall follow the judgment of the most resolute adherents of the English classical school if we take as its maturest formulation the two books of Cairnes: *Some Leading Principles of Political Economy Newly Expounded* (1874) and *Character and Logical Method of Political Economy*.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, as in the case of every historical summary, the qualifications must be many and important. For the sake of securing full value for this central interpretation, we must take the responsibility of seeming to ignore these subsidiary facts. In the main, English classical economic theory, so called, assumed that economic phenomena are a providential gravitation toward "pre-established harmony." In other words, economic phenomena are the operations of physical laws, the effects of which human beings may temporarily disturb, but at last the laws are bound to work out their foreordained results, whether men will or no. This is a half-truth of which in an approximate way the German state-collectivistic presumption is the other half-truth. The Germans who devoted themselves after 1820 to elaboration of economic theory were bound

<sup>1</sup> Second edition, 1875, explained in the first sentence of the Preface as "a new edition of some lectures delivered in Dublin more than 17 years ago," i.e., about 1858. See *Encyc. Amer.*, title "Sociology," p. 210.

by their national prepossessions to accept as practical wisdom the programs of state initiative handed down in the traditions of cameralism, and in the actual operation of the departmental bureaus. On the other hand, in what they regarded as their science they went over to the English half-truth, viz., state intervention is an assault upon invincible cosmic order; therefore, stop all interference with this order, and let economic laws work themselves out through the impulses of individuals.

It is no part of our present program to search out further reasons that may account for the attraction which English theory so long exerted upon the Germans. Two or three circumstances, however, are enlightening. These show that, on the side of method, pure and simple, as distinguished from doctrines arrived at by the method, there was no such contrast between Adam-Smithism and the methodological conceptions at which the Germans had arrived as there was between the antecedent individualistic presumptions on the one side and collectivism on the other.

In the first place, Adam Smith's political economy was only a chapter in his moral philosophy. He was professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow. The article on Adam Smith in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* contains these items: His course of lectures was divided into four parts—(1) natural theology, (2) ethics, (3) justice, (4) economic policy (3 and 4 are not so named in the article). The writer adds in comment upon 3: "a treatment of that branch of morality which relates to justice, a subject which he handles after the manner of Montesquieu, 'endeavoring to trace the gradual progress of jurisprudence, both public and private, from the rudest to the most refined ages, and to point out the effect of those arts which contribute to subsistence and to the accumulation of property, in producing corresponding improvements, or alterations in law and government.'" Under 4, the writer adds: "a study of those political regulations which are founded not upon the principle of justice, but that of expediency, and which are calculated to increase the riches, the power and the prosperity of the state. . . .

In 1759 appeared his *Theory of the Moral Sentiments*, embodying the second portion of his university course. After the publication of this work, his ethical doctrines occupied less space in his lectures, and a larger development was given to the subject of jurisprudence and political economy."

The subsequent course of events showed that the men who professed to be followers of Adam Smith left out of his system that which in his mind gave it authority, viz., the subordination of political and economic expediency to ethical principles. Whether Smith's own ideas of this relation would bear examination or not is unessential. The point is that he had no political nor economic doctrines which he did not regard as subject to the veto of ethical principles. By the time the economic theory which claimed him as its progenitor had come to be known as "the dismal science," its original subordination to ethical preconceptions was forgotten or ignored or denied; and British classical economics had virtually become elaboration of the dogma, "political and economic expediency is the first and last law of nature and of God."

Smith's English followers either never understood his subordination of economic policy to morality or they forgot it; and the Germans followed the English example of paying little attention to it. Indeed, it is impossible to tell how late in the nineteenth century it was before any considerable number of them discovered it. The fact, however, that Adam Smith's economic theory was suspended in a bigger theory of moral relations may have done more to commend it to the Germans than appears. When, in the 1870's, as we shall see presently, the German economists deliberately adopted ethical standards, this revolution might have been described, without essential error, as a reiteration of the neglected portion of Adam Smith's social philosophy; or at least a belated assertion of its fundamental postulate, viz., that the affairs of men are minor orbits within a moral cosmos. That is, German economists did not revive Smith's specific moral theories, but they returned to a moral theory of their own. They asserted that the



moral element in all human acts must henceforth have its due place in economic judgments. Hence the insolence and arrogance with which the old-school English and American economists treated the German ethical school after 1870. It rebuked them for dropping the moral regulator from their variation of the Smithian philosophy.

In the second place, Adam Smith's theory purported to rest upon historical precedents. Indeed more than half a century after the *Wealth of Nations* was published, Roscher, who ranks as the chief master-builder of the German "historical school of economics," referred to Adam Smith as one of the pioneers in promoting the historical method.<sup>1</sup> Smith's doctrine actually was inductive in its form. In this respect it appealed directly to the historical spirit which all German social scientists were developing; and presently the Germans evolved a so-called historical school of economists. This tendency had much to do with the later discovery that the dogmas of the classicists rested on too narrow historical inductions. That is, the historical school attempted to correct less history by more history.

In the third place, a considerable portion of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was in the best spirit of the German cameralists. This portion, conspicuously Books V and VI, was really a treatise on the expediencies of taxation and public finance. It presented no difficulties of the first rank to the Germans; while the larger generalizations, in which this more concrete doctrine was carried, appealed strongly to their philosophizing habit.

In the fourth place, there was a psychological strain in the classical theory which could not remain permanently stifled under the hypothesis of blindly working physical laws. The very appeal to "economic self-interest" was an appeal to "interest," i.e., to a factor which is not physical, in any sense that we can discover; it is psychical. When the protagonists of self-realizing physical law admitted a psychical accomplice into their plot, they had to leave

<sup>1</sup> *Grundriss zu Vorlesungen über Pol. Econ.*, p. 150.

the door open for possible entrance of other psychical agents. In short, such variations of method as were presently introduced by the so-called "Austrian School" of economic theorists (about 1870), and then by the social psychologists, were merely matters of time.

To understand the central movement in German economic thinking, then, from 1820 to 1870, one might almost as well study the corresponding period in English economic thinking, say from Ricardo to Jevons. Between 1870 and 1890, however, German economic theory departed more widely from the classical precedents than English theory has varied to this day.

Analysis of the methodology of the following succession of writers (mostly British) will sufficiently demonstrate, not the immutability, but the tenacity of the "classical" conceptions:

1. Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 1876. Cf. Cossa, *Guide to the Study of Political Economy*, pp. 161-70. Small, *Adam Smith and Modern Sociology*.
2. Malthus, *Essay on Population*, 1798, etc.; *Political Economy*, 1836.
3. Ricardo, *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, 1817. Cf. Ingram, *History of Political Economy*, pp. 122-37.
4. Sismondi, *New Principles of Political Economy*, 1819. Cf. Ingram, *History of Political Economy*, p. 166.
5. James Mill, *Elements of Political Economy*, 1821.
6. J. B. Say, *Treatise on Political Economy*, original 2d ed., 1840. Cf. Cossa, pp. 111-12.
7. Jones (Richard), *Essay on the Distribution of Wealth*, 1831.
8. Senior, *Outline of the Science of Political Economy*, 1838. Cf. Ingram, pp. 138 f.; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, title "Senior."
9. J. S. Mill, *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, 1844; *Principles of Political Economy*, 1st American ed. 1844. Cf. Ingram, pp. 146 f.
10. H. C. Carey (American), *Principles of Political Economy*, 1838; *Principles of Social Science*, 1859.
11. Rickards, *Population and Capital*, 1854.
12. Bastiat, *Harmonies Économiques*, 1850: Eng. trans., 1860.
13. Perry (American), disciple of Bastiat, *Elements of Political Economy*, 1866.
14. Cairnes, *Logical Method of Political Economy*, 1857; *Essays in Political Economy*, 1873; *Leading Principles Newly Expounded*, 1874.
15. T. E. Cliffe Leslie, *On the Historical Method in Economics*, 1876, in his *Essays Moral and Political*, 1879. Cf. Ingram, p. 228.

16. Jevons, *Theory of Political Economy*, 1871. Cf. Ingram, p. 231.
17. Sidgwick, *Leading Principles of Political Economy*, 1883. Cf. Ingram, pp. 221, 226, 239.
18. Keynes, *Scope and Method of Political Economy*, 1891.
19. *Science Economic Discussion*, 1886. Cf. Ingram, p. 237.
20. Political Economy in the United States as represented by the first two volumes of the *Proceedings of the American Economic Association*, 1885-88.
21. Political Economy in the United States as represented by the first two volumes of the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.
22. A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, 1890.
23. Nicholson, *Principles of Political Economy*, 1901.
24. MacLeod, *The History of Economics*, 1896.

As the developments in economics which had the most direct and obvious influence upon sociology are intimately related to the departures from traditional models, we shall give most attention to the German succession. From 1820 to 1870, both in England and in Germany, the dominant and domineering economic thinking was elaboration of the fundamental generalization which figured in a slightly varied form as "economic determinism." We may restate the logical and methodological peculiarity of this stage of thinking in this way:

A certain range of historical and contemporary phenomena had been observed, say by Adam Smith. The tacit assumption had followed that universally valid conclusions might be drawn from this survey. The actual conclusions which were drawn, which we may conveniently symbolize by the omnibus phrase "economic determinism," were assumed to be a valid induction. That is, the generalization was supposed to contain all the truth about all the particulars that can ever emerge within the field of phenomena so generalized. For example, in the concrete the assumption involves this: in principle, all the variations of relationship have been accounted for, which can arise ever or anywhere between cultivators of land and owners of land; or between owners of land, owners of fixed and circulating capital occupying land, and manual laborers operating with this land and capital. All these possible variations of relation between landlords, laborers, and capitalists

amount to the universal phenomenon "economic determinism." This phenomenon is to be expressed in detail in a group of invariable "laws" of economic cause and effect. Consequently, economic science is complete in its foundations. All that remains is to explain particular occurrences which may arise from time to time, so as to show how, in spite of all contrary appearances, each illustrates the universal sway of "economic determinism."

It would almost seem as though the pure logicians, whether they had any knowledge of economic facts or not, might have forecast in general what later occurred. Without serious danger of turning out to be false prophets, the abstract logicians might have said to the classical economists: (1) "The time will come when people will challenge your basic claim, viz., that you have made a true induction. They will deny that you have observed and analyzed all the actual or possible kinds of relations between all the different kinds of partners in economic activities, and they will assemble facts which cannot be accounted for plausibly by your sort of economic hypothesis."

These logicians might have continued: (2) "The time will come when men will challenge your central hypothesis of exclusive economic self-interest. While they will not be able wholly to eliminate that factor from human affairs, they will be able to assemble plenty of facts, more or less strictly economic in their nature, which cannot be conclusively explained by the factor of economic self-interest alone. Such mass phenomena as monasticism, the crusades, scholasticism, Renaissance, Reformation, Counter-Reformation, the democratic revolutions, will defy explanation, even of their primarily economic elements, solely by your economic self-interest clue."

The logicians might have added: (3) "The time will come when men will ridicule your attempt to reduce all men to the mere 'economic man.' They will find that the man laboring, or doing anything else within the range of economic activity, is the same human being who loves and hates, who laughs and weeps, who

covets and sacrifices, who grovels and aspires. He is moved by castes and hierarchies of impulses which none of our philosophies have explained. Men will never rest content with economic theories which fall short of reckoning with the full force and variety of these human motives."

These logicians might have predicted: (4) "The time will come when people will refuse to be misled by your fiction that human beings ever do, or ever can, act strictly as individuals, whether in economic activities or elsewhere. People will come back to the homely common sense that human life is an affair of plain folks living and moving and having their being as members one of another. They will refuse to blink the everyday fact that no man lives in a moral vacuum."

These same logicians might have continued to prophesy: (5) "For better or for worse our destinies are worked out in constant varieties of give and take with one another. In proportion to the vitality and intimacy of the groups into which we arrange ourselves, we become partial fates to one another. Rational human life, therefore, demands complete accounting for the different ways in which all our relations, both in their individual and in their group aspects, react upon one another. It simply retards progress toward intelligent and successful living to dally with theories which treat any human reciprocities, from those of the family to those of rival states, as economically negligible. On the contrary, all these inter-human relationships are the constant conditions of our existence. The time will come when men will see that the primary demand on the intellectual side, as a condition of wise living, is comprehension of all the different ways in which each type of person and each phase of life is affected by each other type. The perception will follow that no claimant to recognition as a 'science' of any portion of human life will be able permanently to maintain that claim except on the basis of co-operation, to the extent of its resources, in efforts of all the sciences and all the arts so to control the conditions of human life that the utmost realization of human possibilities may



be promoted." The logicians might well have concluded, "Substantially this formula will be the final counsel of human intelligence." Again this was precisely what began to be, in more and more ways as the nineteenth century advanced, and the more penetrating of these perceptions which should have been obvious began to differentiate the sociological tendency after 1880.

Whether pure logic should have projected this forecast or not, essentially what we have outlined has actually occurred in the primarily economic thinking of both Germany and England. We cannot here go into the particular ways in which these altered angles of vision affected the academic thinking of either country. The perceptions which we have indicated as almost inevitable logical inferences actually had their prophets, with voices of various carrying powers, in both countries, before the prevalence of the "classical" doctrine was appreciably reduced in either. We shall refer merely to a series of the more notable indexes of this progress in Germany.

No more distinct idea can be given of the dilemma in which the classical theory was involved, from Adam Smith on, than is furnished by MacLeod's array of John Stuart Mill against himself. Under the title *Self-contradiction of John Stuart Mill as to the Method of Investigation Proper to Economics*, he presents a case which is worthy of careful attention.<sup>1</sup>

With the foregoing general statements, we might frame a briefer conspectus for strictly sociological purposes by passing from this point to a short account of the chief variants of classical economic theory, up to and including the definitive declaration of independence which the great majority of the German economists published about 1870, as their final break with English classical economic theory. In the hope of bringing out more distinctly, however, some of the factors which were making for the irresistible differentiation of sociology, we shall go back and elaborate somewhat the general propositions thus far in the present section. Before retracing

<sup>1</sup> *History of Economics*, pp. 10 f.

our steps for more detailed references to the whole transition in which British economic thinking exerted such peculiar influence in Germany, we should register another radical generalization which may be expressed in this way:<sup>1</sup>

During the period which we have indicated by the approximate dates 1820-70, the leading economists both of England and of Germany were in effect engaged in a co-operative attempt to establish the Smith-Ricardo tradition as final economic doctrine. At the same time they were, in effect, assembling the findings of a co-operative process of trial and error tests of that doctrine. This experimentation constituted a body of experience which later did much to mold the convictions of the Americans who differentiated sociology. One after another the minor hypotheses under the general "economic determinism" presupposition failed to convince. That is, no one of them commended itself to a majority as the lacking clue to the problem of economic relations. Not by force of syllogistic reasoning, but by moral certainty the lesson was impressed by these failures that the quest for a single clue to economic causation was unintelligent. It was inevitable that someone would have the wit to assume that economic groupings and economic behaviors are not the results of any single cause, but that they are effects of "multiple causation." The perception was near at hand that economic groups are not self-sufficient entities, but phases of the human intercourse which proceeds through formation of instrumental groupings to serve the diverse purposes of identical bodies of persons. It was certain too that the liability of these economic groupings to influence from all the other groupings in a given society would sooner or later call for reckoning in economic theory. In short, experimentation with the more summary type of economic theory unwittingly prepared the minds of certain scholars for that venture in a different kind of group analysis which presently became known as sociology.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Encyc. Amer.*, title "Sociology," p. 210, end of second column.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

A somewhat idealized schedule of the chief factors which molded German economic thinking in the nineteenth century would read as follows. The dates are conventionalized. They do not precisely correspond with concrete events.<sup>1</sup>

1. 1820. The attempts to reduce economic cause and effect to a system of universal formulas. Rau, following Adam Smith and Ricardo.<sup>2</sup>
2. 1840. The attempt to organize economic theory around a revived nationalistic mercantilism. List and the Zollverein.
3. 1850. The attempt to reconstruct classical economic theory on the basis of comparative economic history. The so-called "Historical School." Bruno Hildebrand, Jena; Wilhelm Roscher, Leipzig; Karl Knies, Heidelberg.
4. 1860. The supreme attempt to absorb British "Manchesterism" into German theory and practice, Prince-Smith, Volkswirtschaftlicher Congress.
5. 1870. The attempt to reconstruct economic theory by appeal to psychology. The Austrian School, Karl Menger, Böhm-Bawerk.
6. 1870. The attempt to reconstruct economic theory and practice as a phase of ethics. The professorial socialists. Wagner, Schmoller, *Verein für Socialpolitik*.
7. 1860-1880. The attempt to reconstruct economic theory on a *sociological* basis. Schäffle, *Das gesellschaftliche System der menschlichen Wirthschaft*.

<sup>1</sup> Cossa, *Guide to the Study of Political Economy*, pp. 187-201, expands the following exhibit by adding details more important for the economist than for the sociologist, and by introducing persons less significant for our purpose.

<sup>2</sup> Cossa remarks (*loc. cit.*): "Among those German economists who have been in the main faithful to the new scientific bent given to political economy by Adam Smith, and have expanded his doctrines with breadth, learning and moderation, the first place doubtless belongs to Karl Heinrich Rau (died 1870). He was a professor in the university of Heidelberg, and the author of a complete course of political economy. This work was divided by him into the three parts of national economy, economic politics, and the science of finance. It is an encyclopaedia of economic doctrines, being rich in statistical and bibliographical illustrations, and paying special attention to the application of economics to the administration of the state. Rau was gifted with qualities which enabled him for many years to keep his work on a level with the progress of the science. He had a solid mind, wide culture, and an impartial judgment. His opinions were moderate, his exposition orderly and clear; and he had a keen perception of the relation between theory and practice. His work was used as a text-book in the principal universities of Germany, and till 1854 it met with no serious competition. Indeed many works which were written before and after it were forgotten or neglected in consequence, several of them being of some merit."

Ein Lehr-und Handbuch der ganzen politischen Oekonomie, einschliesslich der Volkswirtschaftspolitik und Staatswirthschaft. Dritte, durchaus neu bearbeitete Auflage in zwei Bänden. Tübingen, 1873.<sup>1</sup>

Our space limits will not permit us to follow in detail the emergence of all the variants in economic theory which had a share in preparing the way for sociology. We shall discuss briefly the most important of these modifications. We begin with the movement numbered 3 above.

<sup>1</sup> Schäffle's influence as an economist began to be felt as early as 1860.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE ATTEMPT TO RECONSTRUCT CLASSICAL ECONOMIC THEORY ON THE BASIS OF COMPARATIVE ECONOMIC HISTORY, 1850

No more direct method is possible of visualizing the influence which is of chief interest for us in this movement than to allow its most eminent exponent to speak for himself.

In 1843 Roscher, who was then at Göttingen, published a syllabus of 150 pages entitled: *Grundriss zu Vorlesungen über die Staatswirthschaft nach geschichtlicher Methode*. The author explains in the Preface that he hoped the saving of note-taking which the syllabus would make possible would amount to fifteen hours in the course of the year, in a total of one hundred lecture hours. He continues:

If this pamphlet should fall into the hands of an expert [*Kenner*] in the science, he will not fail to observe that throughout the treatment a severely applied method is fundamental, viz., *the historical method*. It goes without saying that judgments of this method should be suspended until in larger works I have clothed the bare skeleton with flesh and blood. *The historical method* consists not merely in chronological arrangements of any material whatever with which it may deal, but its chief characteristics are to be found in the following principles:

1. The question how national wealth may best be promoted is indeed also for us<sup>1</sup> a cardinal question; but it by no means constitutes our sole aim. Civic economy [*Staatswirthschaft*] is not merely a chrematistics, an art of getting rich. It is a *political science*, in which the pivotal matter is the judging and governing of people. Our aim is an exhibit of that which, in economic respects, peoples have thought, willed and felt [*empfundem*], what they have attempted and accomplished, why they have attempted and accomplished it. Such an exhibit is possible only in closest alliance with the other sciences of popular life, especially with legal, constitutional and cultural history.

<sup>1</sup> I.e., as well as for the classicists.



2. The people [*das Volk*], however, is not merely the mass of individuals now living. Whoever wishes therefore to investigate public economy can never reach his end by observing merely contemporary economic circumstances. Consequently, in our judgment, study of earlier stages of culture, which is the best teacher in connection with the more backward peoples of the present, has almost equal importance with study of the present, although our distribution of lecture time should not give the past as much room as the present.

3. The difficulty of culling out of the great mass of phenomena the most important and typical [*regelmässig*] lays upon us the urgent duty of comparing with one another, in economic respects, all the peoples about whom we may be able to assemble the necessary facts. In the case of the modern nations, they are indeed, in every respect, so closely interrelated that no thorough investigation of one is possible without consideration of all. And the ancient peoples, whose careers are now closed, have the peculiar value, as material for instruction, that their developments are at all events before us in their completed form. In case then in modern economics a tendency might appear which is similar to a tendency among the ancients, we should have in this parallel an invaluable guide for judgment.

4. The historical method will not be likely to indulge in indiscriminate praise or blame of any economic institution. On the other hand, the economic institutions have probably been few which have been equally wholesome or harmful for all peoples and for all stages of civilization. The leading-strings of the child, the staff of the old man, would be intolerable for the man of mature years. It is rather the chief task of science to show how and why unreason became reason, and affliction was turned into beneficence. The genius, to be sure, no matter how inadequate his study of the objects to be understood, will easily distinguish between the aspects of the case which are important in practice, the obsolete and the vital. But what teacher would care to assume that he addresses only genius? As a rule he only can judge rightly when, where and why, for instance equal tribute in kind, feudal services, guild privileges, company monopolies must be abolished, who has completely understood why, at their time, they had to be introduced. The doctrine should not in general, by use as a sort of bridge of asses, make practice easier. Rather should it make practice more difficult, since it calls attention to the thousand and one considerations which at every step must be taken into account by legislator or statesman.

One sees that this method aims to accomplish for public economy what the Savigny-Eichhorn method did for jurisprudence. It is far from the school of Ricardo, although it does not oppose that school directly, and even thankfully appropriates its results. It is so much the nearer to the methods of Malthus

and Rau. Far as I am from regarding the historical approach as the only way to truth, or even as absolutely the shortest way, yet I am as little in doubt that it leads through peculiarly attractive and fruitful regions, and once properly developed will never be entirely abandoned. Historical public economy can and should do for history something like what histology and physiological chemistry are doing today for natural history. . . .

Section one of the syllabus, entitled *Method of the Civic Sciences in General*, consists of the following three paragraphs:

#### ROSCHER'S STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

##### 1. *Difference between the Historical and the Philosophical Methods.*

The philosopher is after a system of ideas [*Begriffe*] or judgments, as abstract as possible, utterly denuded of all the accidents of time and space. The historian wants a delineation of human developments and relationships, represented as faithfully to actual life as possible. The former has explained a fact when he has defined it, and when no idea appears in his definition which had not been already discussed in earlier parts of the system. The latter is presumed to have explained a fact when he has pictured the people by whom and upon whom the action came to pass.

##### 2. *Subjective Character of the Philosophical Civic Ideals.*

The ordinary form in which philosophical civic theory appears is that of the *ideal state*. There are many expressions for the same. There are wide contrasts between both bases and results. Yet almost all ideals of the state, however abstract at first sight they may appear, are only somewhat beautified copies of that political condition which in reality surrounds the author, or which the party to which the author belongs desires to introduce. The like is the case with the champions of natural rights, and with the Aestheticists. The single [*sic*] exception to the rule is that of the eclectics, and those in the case of the most eminent theorists of modern times—Machiavelli, the reformers, the Jesuits, the absolutists of the seventeenth century, Locke, Montesquieu, the revolutionaries, the moderate constitutionalists. The truth holds even of Plato. Explanation of this law: The effectiveness of great civic theorists rests ordinarily on the fact that they furnish scientific expression and scientific authentication [*Begründung*] to the vague feeling and unauthorized [*unbegründete*] wishes of their contemporaries. But the actual needs of a people must eventually be satisfied in real life. Only when through the passing of the generations the *Volk* gradually becomes transformed, can the transformed people also need changed political institutions. Such crises, in so far as they are resolved by legal means, are called reforms. If violence is the medium, we

call them revolutions. If then two philosophers elaborate the most diverse political creeds of two such parties into a system, from the historical point of view they do not contradict each other. Each may be right relatively to his people and his time.

### 3. *The Historical Method.*

Investigation of the political impulses [*Triebe*] of men; and this is possible only by comparison of all known peoples.<sup>1</sup> That which is of the same type in the various popular developments must be synthesized as a developmental law [*Entwicklungsgesetz*]. The work of the historian resembles that of the investigator of nature. In so far as this historical method does not wander off on false trails, it at all events has objective truth. It is the most instructive for the man of affairs. This less indeed through immediate prescriptions than by education of the political sense in general. Its highest aim is to perpetuate in scientific elaboration the political accomplishments of mankind.

In Book I, entitled *Production of Goods*, Roscher uses practically the categories of Ricardo. On page 2 he uses the categories *Gebrauchs- und Tauschwert*, which Marx did not claim to have invented to be sure, but which he used (*Das Kapital*, *passim*) as though he had discovered all that is important in their meaning. Roscher refers immediately after the title to Torrens, *An Essay on the Production of Wealth*, 1821. If the passages quoted above had not given notice of a variation from the English model, it would be quite easy to read this general part of the syllabus without discovering that it represented a new departure in method. One might notice only that its tone is a little less dogmatic than that of Ricardo, and that its illustrations point to a wider survey of times and places than is apparent in the British writers. After Book I, the argument passes over into the region which later was often called "applied economics."

At our present distance, both in time and in thought, from the state of mind which Roscher addressed, it is difficult to believe that propositions which to us are matters of course could ever have

<sup>1</sup> I venture the opinion that when Roscher used the term impulse (*Trieb*) in this connection, he was close to the clue which a generation later Ratzenhofer used with such effect—"the interests" (*Die Interessen*). Ratzenhofer also used the category *die sozialen Triebe*.

provoked opposition. They seem to us hardly above the level of platitudes. Yet for decades they were a storm center of bitter antagonism in Continental Europe, while in England and America, until quite recently, it has been good form among the more traditional economists to treat the entire historico-ethical movement with indifference if not contempt.<sup>2</sup>

In so far as the controversy was merely a family quarrel among the economists, we are not directly concerned with it. We are not bound to express a judgment upon the merits of the dispute from the strictly economic point of view. It turns out, however, that the men who afterward called themselves sociologists unwittingly became residuary legatees of both parties to the controversy. A more sophisticated sense of dependence upon the past for understanding of the present was one of the by-products of the ensuing conflict of ideas.

It would not be possible to go into much further detail as to this development of ideas about economic method, without involving ourselves in evaluation of the various factors in all the economic attitudes in Germany between 1843 and 1914. In order to keep the purpose of the present inquiry out of eclipse, we must resist the lure of that stage of methodological evolution, as an independent subject of inquiry, and we must confine ourselves to its significance for sociology. In order to do this, we must defer reference to further developments until we have considered two movements which were later variants of economic theory. After reference to these movements we shall return to later stages in the influence of the "historical school."

Meanwhile we may anticipate to this extent: American sociology in particular is indebted to the German historico-economic movement in more ways than are likely ever to be traced out in detail. From their direct and indirect contacts with the movement, men who afterward became sociologists derived not merely a few non-committal generalities, like the commonplace that we cannot

<sup>2</sup> See Laughlin's edition of Mill (1884), pp. 33-35.

understand the present without understanding the past. They derived the stabilizing conviction that progress in social science depends, among other things, upon learning how to make the past reveal to us essential laws of human society. They derived, further, wholly or in part, sufficient impulse to drive them into the life-work of finding ways and means of extracting this knowledge from the past. To what extent this impulse was, on the one hand, an expression of a specific type of faith which has now changed its content, to what extent the faith has thus far justified itself in its works, are questions beside the mark. The substantial truth is that he who looks for the origins of American sociology must find them in part in conclusions which German economists had reached in the course of their conversion to the historical method as the dominating procedure in economic theory. In order that some concrete evidence may be in the record, to indicate how Roscher's idea of method worked out in his treatment of what he regarded as proper subject-matter of political economy, we present the Table of Contents of his chief theoretical work, *Die Grundlagen der Nationaloekonomie*. We quote from the translation by Lalor, entitled *Principles of Political Economy*. Of first-rate importance is the "Preliminary Essay" of forty-eight pages (written in 1857) by M. Wolowski, member of the Institute of France, on *The Application of the Historical Method to the Study of Political Economy*.

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#### BOOK I

#### PRODUCTION OF GOODS

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Insertion of this Table of Contents may seem to require explanation, if not apology.

Explanation yes; apology no. More vividly than any substitute, the Table presents the bill of particulars which in Roscher's mind covered the ground to be surveyed by the historical method in economics. Nothing short of this exhibit can furnish to our generation an adequate clue to explain the storm which raged for decades among German economic theorists, and which spread to every part of the world in which there were economic theorists. To one who learns of it for the first time today, it must give the impression of a tempest in a teapot. It actually was an apparently necessary stage in the evolution of more adequate economic theory and of social science in general. To adherents of the classical school in particular Roscher's list of topics read like the inventory of a scrap heap. The demand for admission of such a program into good standing in economics seemed to them equivalent to a proposal for a countermarch of the promising advance toward order and system in economic thinking, and for a retreat toward chaos. Hence the reaction of which we shall proceed to use Menger as the representative.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ATTEMPTS (ABOUT 1870) TO RECONSTRUCT ECONOMIC THEORY BY APPEAL TO PSYCHOLOGY

THE SO-CALLED "AUSTRIAN SCHOOL," KARL Menger,  
BÖHM-BAWERK, ETC.

While the historical school had been developing into the dominant methodological force in German economic theory (1843-83) two competing movements had gathered momentum. They did not turn out to be essentially alien to the historical movement. They rather called for reconstruction of general outlook, and adaptation to better procedure. One of these movements is indicated in the title of this section. We shall use Karl Menger as the representative of the movement. He was born in 1840. In 1871 he was beginning his long and influential academic career at Vienna. As in the previous cases, we repeat that selection of a single man is a device in the interest of emphasis. The representative chosen was not the whole movement, perhaps not the most significant among the men who made the movement. All that is necessary for our purpose is that he was a part of the movement and a typical spokesman for it. While contending primarily, as we shall see, for widening and deepening of economic theory through appeal, as we now naturally express it, to the psychological factors involved in economic behavior, Menger's argument affected the adherents of the historical school as an attempt to turn the clock back to the time of Ricardo. Neither the Roscher nor the Menger group quite understood the other, but between them ideas were clarified which the sociologists presently appropriated as searchlights. Without further comment, the case of the Austrian School against the historical tendency may

rest with the following digest of Menger's brief.<sup>1</sup> We begin with his book *published in 1871*, entitled *Grundsätze der Volkswirtschaftslehre*. It contains only 285 pages, and is scarcely more than a syllabus. It is dedicated to Roscher, and this is sufficient to show that the author at least respected those historical aspects of method with which Roscher's name was most closely associated. Yet on the whole Menger opposed the historical school more than he supported it (see *Die Irrthümer*). As the title-page contains the clause "*Erster, Allgemeiner Theil*" it implies that one or more supplementary volumes were in the author's plans. No continuation of the work in the contemplated form was published.

Menger's Preface is as follows:

Since our time accords to the advances in the field of the natural sciences such general and eager recognition, while our science is so little respected and its value is so seriously questioned in the very quarters in which it should be the basis of practical activity, the reason must be evident to everyone who is unprejudiced. Never has there been an age which placed the economic interests higher than our present appraisal; never was the need of a scientific basis for economic action more general and more deeply felt; never was the capacity of practical men, in all departments of human initiative, to make the achievements of science useful, greater than in our own day. It cannot therefore be charged to the frivolity of the incapacity of practical men, nor to an arrogant rejection of that deeper insight which true science offers to the practical men about facts and relations that determine the outcome of his activities (it cannot be charged to these things), when practical men disregard developments of our science up to date, and consult rather their own experience. On the contrary, the reason for such notable indifference must be found solely in the contemporary condition of our science itself, in the future of previous endeavors to secure the necessary empirical bases.

Each new attempt in this direction, no matter with what feeble powers it is undertaken, carries consequently its own justification. Investigation of the bases of our science means dedication of energy to the performance of a task

<sup>1</sup> Notice that Menger treats Schäffle as one of the originators of this tendency. (1) *Grundsätze der Volkswirtschaftslehre*, 1871. (2) *Untersuchungen über die Methode der Sozialwissenschaften, u. d. Politischen Oekonomie insbesondere*, 1883. (3) *Die Irrthümer des Historismus*, 1884, being a reply to Schmoller, "Zur Methodologie der Staats und Sozialwissenschaften," *Jahrb. für Gesetzgebung* (1883) VII, 975 (and reprinted in essays).

which is in closest connection with the well-being of mankind, to serve a public interest of the highest importance, and to pursue a course in which even mistake is not entirely without merit.

In order, however, that such an undertaking may not encounter the just suspicion of experts, we may not on the one hand omit thorough consideration of all the directions in which the spirit of research has penetrated within the scope of our science, nor, on the other hand, should we hesitate with complete independence to appraise the views of our predecessors, and even of those doctrines which, up to the present time, have passed as fixed achievements of our science. By the former error we should voluntarily forfeit the benefit of the whole mass of experience which so many gifted minds among all peoples and periods have assembled; by the latter we should surrender all hope of profound reform of the bases of our science. We avoid these dangers by making the views of our predecessors our own spiritual possession, while at the same time we never hesitate to test the same, and to appeal from academic doctrines to experience, from human thoughts to the nature of things.

This is our platform. In what follows our effort has been to trace back the complicated phenomena of human industry to the simplest elements, which at the same time are open to reliable observation. We have tried to measure these elements by a standard corresponding with their nature, and again, while holding to this standard, to trace out how the most complicated industrial phenomena develop in an orderly manner out of their elements.

This is precisely the method of investigation which has arrived at such important results in the natural sciences. The method has consequently, through gross misconception, been called the *naturwissenschaftliche*. It would be more correct to call it the *empirical* method, because this would call attention to the element which is common to all sciences of experience. This distinction is moreover of importance because every method receives its particular character from the nature of the field of knowledge in which it is applied. It follows that it is absurd to speak of a "natural science" method within our field.

The previous attempts to transfer the peculiarities of the national science method of investigation uncritically to industrial theory have led to the most serious methodological blunders, and to an empty playing with external analogies between the phenomena of industry and those of nature.

If the attempt is made to justify such endeavors by the claim that it is the task of our time to make out the correlation of all the sciences and the unity of their highest principles, our reply is that we challenge the proposition that it is the vocation of our time to solve this problem. In our opinion, to be sure, investigators in the various fields of science can never, without disadvantage, leave this common goal of their endeavors out of sight. Neverthe-



less not much advance will be made toward this goal until the respective fields of knowledge have been most thoroughly investigated, and until the laws which are peculiar to each are discovered.

It is for our readers to decide about the results to which the method referred to has led us, and whether we have succeeded by our results in demonstrating that the phenomena of industrial life are governed precisely by laws like those of nature. We must defend ourselves only against the opinion of those who would deny the regularity of industrial phenomena by citing the freedom of the human will. The same contention would carry denial of the possibility of all economic theory as an exact science.

Whether and under what conditions a thing is *useful* to me, whether and under what conditions it is a *good*, whether and under what conditions it has a *value* for me, and how great the degree of that value is for me, whether and under what conditions an *economic* exchange can occur between two parties, and the limits within which a scale of prices to cover such exchange can be arranged by the parties—all this is as independent of my will as a law of chemistry is from the will of the practical chemist. Accordingly the view just referred to (the view that *free will* estops regularity in economic phenomena) rests upon an evident error as to the nature of our science. Theoretical economics does not concern itself with practical proposals for industrial procedure. It deals with the *conditions* under which men develop purposeful activity aimed at the satisfaction of their needs.

Theoretical economics is therefore related to the practical activity of men carrying on industry very much as chemistry is to the activity of the practical chemist. A reference to freedom of the human will can have force against the complete regularity of industrial transactions, but never against the regularity of those phenomena which are entirely independent of the human will. These phenomena independent of the human will determine the outcome of economic activity. *These independent phenomena, however, are precisely the subject-matter of our science.*

We have devoted especial attention to investigation of the causal connection between the economic phenomena on the product side and the corresponding production-elements [*sic*]. We have done this not merely for the sake of deriving a comprehensive theory of prices, corresponding to the nature of things (including rates of interest, wages, rent, etc.), but also for the sake of the important disclosures which we hereby obtain with reference to many other hitherto wholly uncomprehended economic occurrences. This is, however, precisely the field of our science in which the regularity [*Gesetzmässigkeit*] of the phenomena of economic life is most evident.

It is a matter of peculiar gratification to us that the field upon which we are here working, embracing the most general laws of our science, is in large

measure peculiarly the preserve of the later developments in German national economy, and the reform here attempted of the highest principles of our science follows accordingly upon the basis of preliminary work which is almost exclusively the achievement of German investigative zeal.

May this monograph therefore be considered also as a friendly greeting from an Austrian collaborator, as a weak echo of the scientific impulses which have come to us Austrians from so many eminent German scholars.

The monograph, which, as was said above, contains only 285 pages, is divided into eight chapters with the following titles:

1. The General Theory of the Good (*vom Gute*)
2. Economy and Economic Goods
3. The Theory of Value
4. The Theory of Exchange
5. The Theory of Price
6. Value for Use and Value for Exchange (*Gebrauchswerth und Tauschwerth*)
7. The Theory of Commodities (*der Waare*)
8. The Theory of Money

We are, of course, dealing now with a variation of economic theory which has since been generally referred to as the view of the Austrian School. It would involve us in a question not essential to our present purpose if we were to inquire into the relative influence and importance of the different men who contributed to the tendency so named. There is peculiar temptation for the sociologist to pry into a still obscure chapter of the history of nineteenth-century social science in Germany which might set forth the precise relation of Schäffle to the whole movement.<sup>1</sup> We must pass all that and refer to Schäffle later in his work on the avowedly sociological side of procedure. It is evident, however, that if Schäffle had not been guilty of what seemed to the economists of his time equivalent to apostasy, by publishing his startling work *Bau und Leben des socialen Körpers*, he would have played a more influential rôle than he did in his later years in modifying economic theory.<sup>2</sup> We shall confine ourselves, then, to Menger as spokesman for the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lexis, in the memorial volume to Schmoller, first paper, p. 41, on the Austrian School.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Philippovich, Art. XXXI, *ibid.*, Vol. II, on Schmoller, Schäffle, Brentano, Scheel, Schönberg, and A. Wagner.

Austrian School, but without implying a judgment one way or the other as to his importance in comparison with others (e.g., Böhm-Bawerk, V. Wiener, Sax, Zuckerkandl, Philippovich) who might be chosen to represent that movement.

The chief reason why the Austrian School of economic theory is of interest to the sociologist is that it was one of the factors which contributed to eventual development, first, of sociology, and then of social psychology. Like Lester F. Ward's *Dynamic Sociology*, published more than a decade after Menger's first monograph, the thesis of the Austrian School was a venture in psychology. Whether in either instance the content of the theory was defensible psychology or not is a trifling question compared with the significant fact that from this time on questions of psychical cause and effect could be ignored no longer in economic or social research. Once more, then, in the course of the development of an antecedent technique, we come upon emphasis of a group of factors which evidently challenged more thorough inquiry than men primarily devoted to other interests were willing to undertake. Men of a certain type did undertake these inquiries, and thus they developed neglected phases of phenomena which the older types of scientific investigation had failed adequately to explain. We might reduce the contention of the Austrian School to the proposition: *The phenomena of the market are at the same time phenomena of the mind, and they must be explained accordingly.* To that extent the Austrian economists began the development of modern sociology.

This being the case, we cannot pass the Austrian School as though it were merely an affair of economists as such. We must allow Menger to develop his thought more fully, because it turned out to be the kind of thinking, not as to content, but as to problem, which the general sociologists and later the social psychologists pursued.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have a very strong personal reason for choosing Menger as the spokesman of the Austrian School. I spent a memorable day with him in Gmünden in 1903. In the course of that day's conversation he summarized his views of the whole develop-

The following is a synopsis of Menger's first chapter on "The General Theory of the Good."

1. All things are subject to the law of cause and effect.
2. Our own personality and each condition of the same are members of this great cosmic interrelation, and the transition of our person from one condition into another is unthinkable except as subject to the law of causality.
3. Those things which have adaptability to be placed in causal connection with the satisfaction of human needs we call *utilities* [*Nützlichkeiten*].
4. In so far as we have brought utilities within the service of our needs, we call them *goods*.
5. In order that a thing may be a good, or in order that it may acquire the goods-quality [*sic*] the four following conditions must concur:
  - a) A human need.
  - b) Qualities of the thing which adapt it to be placed in causal correlation with the satisfaction of this need.
  - c) Recognition of this causal connection by men.
  - d) Control over this thing to the extent of ability to make it subserve the given need.

If either of these four conditions is lacking, nothing can attain the goods-quality in case the four conditions have been concurrent and one or more of them ceases to be present. In other words, the goods-quality does not pertain to things in themselves. It is rather a *relation* between things and persons.

6. We have the phenomena of *imaginary goods*, i.e., things incapable of being in a causal relation with human needs: (a) because the causal relation associated with them does not in reality exist (e.g., charms); (b) because the need which is supposed to demand satisfaction does not exist (e.g., imaginary diseases).

7. The higher the culture, the greater the number of real goods, but the smaller the number of imaginary goods.

8. In spite of the efforts of certain theorists (e.g., Schäffle) to justify a third class of goods entitled *Relationships* (*Verhältnisse*) e.g., firms, patents, etc., the preferable classification of goods is: (a) material goods, including controlled natural power; (b) useful human actions, or services (*nützliche menschlichen Handlungen*).

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ment of German and Austrian economic theory. Before he had finished he said slowly and with apparent deliberation:

"It is entirely indifferent to me whether the name Austrian School be preserved. The important thing is that every economist worthy of the name has now virtually adopted every essential thing that I stood for."

9. On the basis of their more or less *mediate* applicability to the satisfaction of our wants, goods may be classified as of the *first order*, say bread to satisfy hunger; of the *second order*, say *flour* to make bread; of the *third order*, say *wheat* to make the flour, etc.

10. Whether goods of a second order have the goods-quality or not, depends upon whether we control the complementary goods necessary for transforming the goods in question into goods of the first order (e.g., flour, salt, yeast, etc., with or without water, fire, etc.).

11. More difficult is the question whether goods of a higher order than the second are limited in their goods-quality by control over the complementary goods. The correct formula may be expressed in this way: using the term "complementary goods" for the whole sequence of intermediate goods necessary to apply a good of a higher order to the actual satisfaction of a human want, the law is: *The goods-quality of goods of higher orders depends upon control of the complementary goods* (e.g., *cotton machinery* in England during the cotton blockade in the American Civil War, or wheat in the field with no labor to harvest it).

12. In a complicated society with highly developed exchange, this dependence is easily overlooked until some link in the chain of transformations breaks.

13. Goods of a higher order are conditioned in their goods-quality by the corresponding goods of lower orders. (E.g., suppose taste for tobacco disappears, and all other wants that tobacco satisfied. Tobacco and the devices connected with production and manufacture of tobacco would to that extent lose goods-quality.)

14. The process through which goods of a higher order are transformed, grade by grade, into goods of a lower order, and these ultimately into satisfaction of human needs, is not lawless. Like all other transformations it is subject to the law of causality.

15. The idea of causality, however, is inseparable from the idea of time.

16. The duration of the process of transformation from higher orders to the first order of goods is highly various.

17. Accordingly the goods-quality of goods of higher orders is conditioned not by their relation to needs of the immediate present, but solely [*sic*] with reference to needs which will be operative at the time when the transformation process is likely to be completed (selling of "futures").

18. When we immediately control certain goods, the quantity and quality of the same are known. When, however, we control only the goods of a higher order, there is less certainty about the quantity and quality of the goods of lower orders which can be controlled at the end of a period of transformation.<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> Philippovich, "The Infusion of Socio-political Ideas into the Literature of German Economics," *American Journal of Sociology*, XVIII (1912-13), 145.



19. Adam Smith attributed the increasing productivity of labor, and consequent increase of material prosperity, chiefly to division of labor. Other not less important factors must be added.

20. *Progressive understanding of the causal connection of things with human well-being and progressive control of the remoter conditions of the same*, have been, and must continue to be, the measure of economic progress.

21. Human attempt to satisfy needs resolves itself into provision [*Vorsorge*] for supplying future requisitions [*Bedarf*] for goods.

22. We call a man's "demand" [*Bedarf*] that quantity of goods which is required to satisfy his needs [*Bedürfnisse*] within the period which his foresight covers.<sup>1</sup>

23. In order to be successful, human provision [*Vorsorge*] for the satisfaction of wants, presupposes understanding of two kinds: (a) with reference to the quantities of goods which we shall require for the satisfaction of our wants, within those stretches of time which our provision is to cover; (b) with reference to the quantities which will be available for the above purpose.

The body of Menger's book, then, is a formulation of cardinal economic phenomena in terms of the concepts thus indicated. In principle the twenty-three clauses quoted contain the substance of the book.

At the same time the effect which these fundamental ideas had upon further development of economic theory could not have been at once anticipated by inspection of these elementary theorems. There is nothing on their face by means of which the abstract logician might have told their fortune, as in the case of the classical theory. It is necessary to an understanding of the details of the Austrian economic theory, therefore, to digest chapter iii entitled "The Theory of Value" (*Die Lehre vom Werthe*, pp. 77-152).

<sup>1</sup> There is the same difficulty in German as in English about fixing on the most convenient words for the different shadings of ideas that are involved in this connection. The usual German equivalents for the English technical terms *demand* and *supply*, are *Nachfrage* and *Angebot*. Menger at this point uses the terms *Bedarf* or *Bedürfnisse* in a way which sometimes nearly corresponds with the terms *Nachfrage* and *Demand*, and he uses the term *Befriedigung* in ways which sometimes correspond with the terms *Angebot* and *Supply*. But these are not in either case, as Menger uses them, precise equivalents. He partially advertises this ambiguity in a note (p. 34) in which he says: "The word *Bedarf* has in our language a double meaning. On the one hand it signifies those quantities of goods which would be requisite to satisfy completely the wants [*Bedürfnisse*] of a person; on the other hand those quantities of goods which a person will *probably* consume, etc."

Menger begins with rather commonplace discussion of the origin of economic value in the relation between *human want and available economic goods* capable of satisfying the want (pp. 77-95). We may assume that these introductory considerations are matters-of-course with people who have learned the elements of economic theory as it is taught today. At the same time we must remember that these rudiments were far from commonplace with economists in 1871. As late as 1864 the fifth edition of John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* (American ed., Book III, chap. i, par. 1) contains this statement:

. . . . The question of Value is fundamental. . . . Happily, there is nothing in the laws of Value which remains for the present or any future writer to clear up, the theory of the subject is complete; the only difficulty to be overcome is that of so stating it as to solve by anticipation the chief perplexities which occur in applying it. . . .

When Professor Laughlin published his adaptation of Mill in 1884 he inserted a "Sketch of the History of Political Economy." This sketch occupies forty-two pages. It makes no reference to Böhm-Bawerk or to Menger, and Schäffle is merely scheduled among "the most prominent Socialists of the Chair" (p. 35). That is, the psychological factors that are the ultimate elements of market phenomena had not at that time received serious attention.

In a lesser degree the same may be said of the two following sections (pp. 95-123) in which the foundation is laid for a strategic center of the Austrian School position, viz., the marginal utility theory. This work is done under the two aspects: (a) dependence of the satisfaction of specific wants upon the concrete goods (the objective factor) (pp. 95-119); (b) the subjective factor of value.

Whether we credit the Austrian School with having contributed much or little to analysis of the phenomena of value, the sociologists, as innocent bystanders with reference to that particular quarrel, can have no doubt that this credit at least is due to the Austrian economists, viz., they made it impossible thenceforth to be satisfied with a conception of value which makes it a quality

residing in things; value must be thought of as *a relation between appraisable goods*, on the one hand, and *appraising mind* on the other.

On the other hand we are less familiar with the kind of analysis contained in Section 3 (pp. 123 ff.) entitled, "The Laws Which Govern the Value of Goods of the Higher Orders." We shall therefore reproduce the substance of this section.

Under the subtitle "On the Decisive Principle of the Value of Goods of Higher Orders," Menger says:

Among the fundamental errors which have had far reaching effects upon the development of our science hitherto, one of the foremost is the theorem that *goods have their value for us because, in the production of the same, goods were used which had value for us*. In the section in which we discuss the price of goods of the higher orders we shall refer to the special reasons for the emergence of this theory and for its effects, in variously modified versions to be sure, as a foundation of the prevailing theory of prices. At this point it is in order merely to observe that the theorem above cited is in such contradiction to all experience [cf. text, p. 120] that it would have to be rejected altogether if the problem of the determination of a principle of the value of goods were to find a solution valid in form.

This purpose of finding a solution *in form* of the problem of value is not reached by the above theorem. It offers us, to be sure, a means of explaining the value of certain goods which we may call "products." It does not furnish means of explaining the value of all those other goods which present to us the aspect of the ultimate elements of production. These include goods immediately given to us by nature, particularly the yield of the soil, and further labor services, and as we shall see later the use of capital. The above proposition fails to explain the value of all these goods, and it is even made incomprehensible by those phenomena of value.

Accordingly the problem of discovering a means of explaining all cases of the value of goods is solved neither in substance nor in form by the above theorem. On the one hand it contradicts experience, and on the other hand it is excluded from application in all cases of goods which are not the product of the combination of goods of higher orders. . . .

This being so, it is also clear that the value of goods of higher orders is not the decisive factor of the probable value of the corresponding goods of a lower order . . . but, on the contrary, under all circumstances the value of goods of the higher orders is fixed by the probable value of the goods of a

lower order to the production of which the goods of a higher order are to be devoted.

This involves great variety in the present values of goods of higher orders. . . .

It follows that there is no necessarily fixed ratio between the present value of goods of higher orders available for producing goods of the lower order. (E.g. ice in winter may have no market value, while at the same moment goods of a higher order capable of producing artificial ice may have a high market value based upon the probable demand for ice in subsequent summers.)

Between the value which goods of a lower order, especially of the first order, have for us in the present moment, and the value at the present moment of available goods of a higher order necessary for the production of the lower order of goods, there is no necessary interdependence (e.g., munitions in hand after peace is declared, and superfluous munition plants).

Accordingly, the value of goods of higher orders does not adjust itself to the present value of goods of lower orders, but on the contrary, under all circumstances the *probable value of the product* is the measure of the value of the higher goods.

#### b) ON THE PRODUCTIVITY OF CAPITAL

The transformations of goods of higher orders into goods of lower orders, like all other transformations, take place *in time*, and the periods necessary for the process vary in accordance with the remoteness of the orders of goods under our control from the *first order* (i.e., sawed lumber vs. growing timber).

While, therefore, progressive requisition upon goods of higher orders to satisfy our wants results in multiplication of means of consumption, this result is possible only under the condition that human prudence shall deal with constantly increasing remoteness in time.

This circumstance involves an important limitation upon economic progress. Human foresight is always directed towards present security of life and welfare, or of the same in the immediate future. This foresight weakens with the remoteness of the period for which it must provide. This phenomenon is not accidental but it is deeply rooted in human nature. . . . As a rule an enjoyment seems to us more important in the present, or in the immediate future, than an enjoyment of equal intensity in a remote future.

Human life is a process in which later phases of evolution are always conditioned by earlier phases; a process which, if once interrupted, may not be resumed; a process which, if essentially destroyed, cannot be completely restored. Provision for the maintenance of our lives, and for our development in coming generations, necessarily presupposes provision for the periods which

must intervene. Disregarding pathological exceptions, therefore, it is a general truth that in carrying on their industries men are in the first place devoted to satisfaction of their wants for the immediate future, and only in a diminishing ratio concerned about subsequent periods.

Accordingly the circumstance which sets a limit to the endeavors of men in economic pursuits to obtain command over goods of higher orders, is the necessity of applying available goods to satisfaction of more immediate needs, while to that extent neglecting more remote needs. In other words, *that economic utility which may be aimed at through control of goods of higher orders is conditioned upon control over quantities of goods to be made available in more remote periods, over and above the goods necessary for present enjoyment.*

With progressive civilization, and with progressive requisition of new quantities of goods of higher orders, goods of higher orders, e.g., land, limestone, lumber, etc., acquire an economic character.

They also acquire ability to participate in those economic advantages which are connected with control of goods of higher orders, in contrast with purely occupying [*occupatorische*] activities. This possibility, however, in the case of each individual, is conditioned upon his control of economic goods of higher orders, or in other words, capital.

This brings us to one of the most important truths of our science, viz., the principle of the *productivity of capital*. This principle, however, must not be understood to mean that control over economic goods could, in and of itself, within definite periods of time, contribute to the increase of available goods for consumption. It means rather that control over economic goods gives to *workers* a means for better and more complete satisfaction of their needs. This is equivalent to saying that such control is a *good*, and more than that an economic good, wherever available capital-utilities [*sic*] are less ample than need of the same.

It turns out that the value which the totality of goods of higher orders necessary to produce a good of a lower, particularly lowest order, has for us at the present moment, is measured by the presumable value of the corresponding product. We must, however, include among the goods of higher orders not merely those goods of higher orders which are necessary for the technical production of the goods of the lower order, but we must also reckon the capital-utilities and the entrepreneur activities which are also essential to the result. Consequently the value which the technical elements of the production have, in and of themselves, *with respect to the present*, is not equal to the entire prospective value of the product. It is always so modified that, at the same time a margin remains for the value of the use of capital and of the entrepreneur activity.



## d) ON THE VALUE OF PARTICULAR GOODS OF A HIGHER ORDER

Generalizing three types of cases, we have the law that the value of goods of a higher order is equal to the difference between the significance of those satisfactions which would result from our control over the quantity of goods of the higher order in question, and those satisfactions which in the opposite case would result from economic use of the totality of the goods of the higher order within our control.

In connection with the previous discussion, this principle may be expanded into the following: *The value of a good of a higher order increases with increase of the probable value of the product, or diminishes with the probable fall of that value, assuming that the value of the complimentary goods of the same order is meanwhile constant.*

## e) ON THE VALUE OF RENT, INTEREST, AND LABOR ("BODEN- UND CAPITALNUTZUNG UND DER ARBEITSLEISTUNGEN")

Pieces of land have no exceptional status among economic goods, i.e., their value is determined by the foregoing laws of the value of higher goods.

On the whole, peculiar modifying details eliminated, the value and price of labor are determined by the same laws.

Twelve years after publication of the book thus digested Menger published *Untersuchungen über die Methode der Socialwissenschaften*. Both because of its merits as a thesis in method, and because it provoked criticism which in turn promoted further development of method, the book must be treated as one of the important evolutionary factors in comparatively recent social science. We accordingly reproduce the substance of Menger's argument.<sup>1</sup>

## PREFACE

The epistemological researches in the field of political economy have not as yet, even in Germany, arrived at a real methodology of this science. The problems of the theory of knowledge which occupy the German national economists, and also in no small degree our colleagues of other countries, are chiefly concerned rather with the nature and concept [*Begriff*] of political economy and its parts, the nature of its truths, the conception of economic

<sup>1</sup> *Untersuchungen über die Methode der Socialwissenschaften, und der Politischen Oekonomie insbesondere*. Von Dr. Karl Menger, Professor der Staatswissenschaften an der Wiener Universität, 1883. With the exception of one or two omissions and a few condensations, and with an occasional substitution of an equivalent figure of speech, rather closely translated.

problems which is adequate to the real relations, etc., etc. They are not questions about the intellectual methods [*Erkenntniswege*] that lead to the goals of economic investigation, and even these goals themselves are still matters of dispute.

To be sure, the above situation is of rather recent date. It is not so long since the essence [*Wesen*] of political economy and the formal character of its truths seemed to be certain, and the investigations of the theory of knowledge in the realm of our science were actually concerned with methodological problems in the proper sense. That political economy is "the science of the laws of popular management" [*Volkswirtschaft*] passed as settled from the time that the conception of it as mere technique [*Kunst*] was abandoned [(1823 ?) Rau]. This conception was regarded also as quite sufficient; and scientific discussion could proceed to investigation of the questions whether those laws must be ascertained by speculation or empirically, inductively or deductively, what special form is adequate to the application of these methods, on the one hand in the field of social phenomena in general, on the other hand in the special field of economics, etc., etc.

All this was bound to change, to be sure, as soon as there were beginnings of more penetrating treatment of methodological problems. Workers in our science were bound to become aware that political economy affords cognitions of one formal species in its theoretical sections, and of quite different formal species in its practical sections. The perception was bound to follow presently that it is inaccurate to speak of *the* method of political economy, but we must rather speak of the *methods*. The paths to knowledge, the methods of investigation, must conform to the aims of the inquiry, to the formal nature of the truths understanding of which is sought.<sup>1</sup> The methods of theoretical national economy and of the practical sciences of economic management cannot be identical. But even in cases in which the above distinction was respected, in which methodological problems were under treatment, or in which attention was given immediately to theoretical economics alone, the perception was bound to arise after close inspection that the very concept "laws of phenomena" is

<sup>1</sup> What Menger has in mind might be illustrated in this way: Suppose the laws sought are those of the numerical relations of the sexes in normal populations. The method of discovering these laws would in general be statistical, i.e., the actual records of male and female births, and then of deaths by decades or half decades, in the largest possible number of countries, or throughout the most numerous possible populations, with incidental discovery of conditions which do or do not make the records of the different countries wholly comparable. Suppose, however, the laws sought were those of actual or just economic distribution. Then the question would have to be settled by economists of 1883 whether the method must be deduction or induction, analysis, or historical precedent, or some combination of method, etc.

elastic (*vieldeutig*), that it embraces truths of quite unlike formal natures, and accordingly the conception of political economy, etc., as a science of "the laws of popular management," is insufficient.

The writers of the post-classical period had indeed combined with the concept of economic technology [*Volkswirtschaftslehre*] the idea of a science of the laws of public economy, of the laws of the coexistence and sequence of economic phenomena, and consequently of the indefiniteness of the above conception. A consequence was that presently a conception arose, more distinctly than it had previously been indicated by individual workers in our field, parallel with the conception of political economy as a science analogous with physics and chemistry, namely a rendering from the anatomo-physiological viewpoint. The conception of public management as an organism, and of its laws as analogous with those of anatomy and physiology, confronted the physical conception; the biological standpoint in research challenged the atomistic presumption.

Scientific investigation did not mark time at this complication of the methodological problem. It was pointed out that societary phenomena in general, and the phenomena of public economy in particular, derived special characteristics, local and temporal, from the individualities of peoples, from local circumstances, particularly from the level of civilization of the society concerned, and that these differences could not be without decisive influence upon the laws of the phenomena. The straining after economic laws which should be universal and unalterable, independent of spatial and temporal circumstances, and for a science of such laws, appeared from this point of view unwarranted, unintelligent, an abstraction from the "complete empirical reality" of the phenomena. On the other hand, from this same point of view, consideration of the local and temporal varieties of economic phenomena seemed to be an indispensable postulate of research, not merely in the field of "practical economic technology" [*Volkswirtschaftslehre*] but also in that of theoretical national economy—of the "science of the laws of public management."

Others went a step farther. They denied that it is necessary to recognize any analogy at all between the laws of nature and those of public management. They asserted that the latter are to be understood rather as laws of historical parallelisms, or as laws of great numbers, that is, as parallelism of the statistics of economics. Along with the atomistic and the organic conception of the problems of our science, and along with the striving to maintain the national and historical viewpoint in theoretical economics, the historico-philosophical and the statistico-theoretical tendencies in research asserted themselves.

As if that were not enough, a research tendency made itself felt which called in question on principle the alleged character of political economy as a

"science of the laws of public management." It declared that political economy was rather a specifically historical science, analogous with historical jurisprudence and philology, and that historical comprehension is the one and only legitimate and attainable aim of investigation in the field of economics. . . .

The conflict of opinions was not confined to the formal nature of the truths of our science. While some described national economy as the "science of the laws of economic phenomena," others regarded this conception as an unauthorized isolation of a special side of public life. The theory that the phenomena of industry must be treated in undetachable correlation with the entire social and civic development of peoples gained many adherents among the economists. To the conflict over the formal nature of the truths of our science, and over the science itself, there was added conflict over the extent and the boundaries of the phenomena which the science should control. To many indeed it appeared doubtful whether political economy should be treated as an independent science at all, and not rather as an organic part of a universal science of society.

For almost a half century debate has centered around these partially concurrent and complementary claims (*ineinander fliessende und sich ergänzende Richtungen*). It need not be said that this situation is anything but favorable to promotion of the methodology of our science.<sup>1</sup> How could investigation of the ways to reach the aims of investigation in political economy (i.e., investigation in methodology proper!) arrive at satisfactory conclusions, or even turn the interest of the learned world in a serious way to the problems concerned, so long as the aims themselves are so completely undecided?

I regard the removal of this difficulty as the most urgent need in the realm of political economy today. The monograph now presented has been created by this need. In accordance with the present status of researches about the theory of knowledge, it is occupied with determination of the nature of political economy, of its parts, of the nature of its truths,—in short with the aims of investigation in the territory of our science. Methodology in the stricter sense of the word is chiefly postponed for later investigation. Interest in this methodology must immediately spring up so soon as these preliminary problems have been settled with a decent approach to agreement.

The discharge of the second part of the above indicated task will perhaps also appear to be much easier than would appear at first glance. Everybody who is at all acquainted with the literature is aware to what extent, time out of mind, philosophical investigation has been occupied with the essentially

<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it was perhaps psychologically the only possible way of promoting it.



methodological problems of the theory of cognition; and that philosophy at this point has arrived at the most valuable results. After we have once reached clear vision about the aims of investigation in the economic field, determination of the ways necessary to reach these goals will, it is to be hoped, not be so very difficult; if only all those who are called to share in the establishing of a methodology of political economy are more zealous and more intelligent than they may thitherto have been in applying the results of investigation of the theory of cognition in general to the special tasks of our science.

We shall look in vain, to be sure, in the writings of the logicians for enlightenment about the aims of investigation in the field of political economy. Insight into the nature of the truths within that realm of knowledge can be the outcome only of comprehensive and expert consideration of the body of phenomena which we must explore, and of the special demands of life upon our science. There can be no doubt that in these respects the logicians have more to learn from us than we from them. . . . Yet I believe that so soon as we have reached assured results about the nature of the truths of political economy, the general results of investigation in the theory of cognition will turn out to be in a high degree valuable in developing the forms of knowledge to be realized in our special field.

To be sure, even then our science is so backward, in comparison with other disciplines, that what can be accomplished is relatively trivial. Indeed, I am by no means inclined to put too high an estimate upon the significance of methodology for investigation in general, or in its particular economic departments. The most important scientific results have been reached by men who were uninterested in methodological problems. On the other hand, the greatest methodologists have not infrequently turned out to be almost sterile investigators in the fields of those sciences the cognitive methods of which they have expounded with such clarity. Their is a measureless gulf between determination of method and satisfying construction of a science; and only the genius of the workers with the method can bridge the same. Positive talent for research, without an elaborate methodology, has often enough produced a science or transformed it in epoch-making fashion; a method without such genius never. Methodology is of incomparable importance for the secondary performances in the field of a science, but it is of diminishing significance for those greater tasks the discharge of which is reserved for genius.

In one case only do methodological investigations seem to me the most important, the most immediate and the most urgent contributions that can be made to promotion of a science. If in a department of knowledge, for any reason whatever, the correct sensibility for the aims of research given in the nature of the case has been lost, if excessive or even decisive significance is



attributed to subsidiary tasks of the science, if erroneous methodological principles sponsored by influential schools gain predominance, and one-sidedness sits in judgment over the endeavors in a field of knowledge; in a word, if the progress of a science is halted by the dominance of erroneous methodological principles,—in that case certainly clarification of the methodological problems is the condition of all further progress. Under such circumstances the hour is struck at which even those are under obligation to enter the controversy over method who would otherwise prefer to devote their energies to the essential tasks of their science.

As a matter of fact, this seems to me to be the situation today in Germany with respect to research in the field of political economy. It is a condition which can scarcely be understood by those who have not attentively followed the development of this science in recent decades.

The conflict of views about the nature of our science, its tasks and its boundaries, in particular the endeavor to impose new aims for investigation in its field, did not originate in the interest of national economists in researches in the theory of knowledge. It begins rather with the growing perception that the theory of national economy, as it came from the hands of Adam Smith and his followers, lacks sure foundations, that it does not even solve the most elementary problems, that in particular it is an insufficient basis for the practical sciences of economic management, and therefore an unreliable guide to practice in their field. Even before the appearance of the historical school of German economists, the conviction began to be current that the previously controlling belief in the completeness of our science was fallacious; that on the contrary it is in need of radical reconstruction.

The moment this conclusion was reached three different paths of reform were open to our science. Either, *first*, reform of political economy must be attempted on the basis of the previous conceptions of the nature and tasks of the science, that is, the theory of Adam Smith must be developed from his own standpoint; or *second*, new channels must be opened for investigation. Reform might effect previous practice or the theory of research.

*Third*, it might be possible to propose a reform program which would be a merger of the other two. It might combine their reformatory ideas on a higher plane. . . . The economic theory of the classical school has not been able satisfactorily to solve the problem of a science of economic laws, but the authority of its doctrine weighs upon us all and hinders progress along those lines in which the investigative spirit for centuries, long before Adam Smith, had sought the solution of the great problem of the founding of theoretical social science.

Much simpler and more promising seemed the other path to reform of our science. It was supposed that the unsatisfactory situation was not due to

inadequate research powers, but to a mistaken plan of research. It was urged the salvation might come from a new research program. Whoever devised such a program should count as a reformer of political economy, even if he accomplished nothing worth mentioning in the way of deepening and authenticating the science, even if he did nothing towards solving its problems. It would be enough if he contented himself with the opening up of great perspectives, with investigations in realms of knowledge legitimate in themselves, yet essentially different from political economy; in short, if he occupied himself with a compilation of the findings of previous researches which defy all unitary apprehension; that is, of those directions of research which have been pronounced erroneous, and most emphatically condemned.

Many circumstances combined to promote these efforts. In the fields of philology, of political science and of jurisprudence new types of research which were not only appreciated on their merits by the learned world and public opinion, especially in Germany, but temporarily at least they were overvalued. What more natural than the idea of taking over these programs into our science? To acquire the fame of a reformer of political economy scarcely more was necessary than a lively imagination for analogies. The reform of political economy as hitherto understood was as difficult as it was thankless. The fame of a path-breaker, of a creator of a new type of research, on the other hand, was within reach without excessive outlay of mental resources. What wonder that among the really learned national economists of Germany the development of theory fell more and more into neglect, while all those who strove for quick returns streamed into new courses, particularly into those in which talents too mediocre for successful dealing with the great economic questions might occupy themselves with profit.

In all this, to be sure, the persons concerned ignored the profound difference between the formal nature of political economy and those sciences from which, in a more or less mechanical fashion, theorems, and even results of investigation were derived. In particular the real tendency of that scientific movement was overlooked which had reconstructed jurisprudence upon the historical basis. As I point out, curious misunderstandings have played a decisive rôle in the reform of political economy, especially by its German reformers. The new types of investigation were in no slight degree the outcome of misunderstood analogies and of disregard of the real tasks of political economy.

Meanwhile, even in quarters where a type of research which was in itself legitimate made itself effective, it was not the product of a comprehensive insight into the system of tasks which science must perform within the field of public economy. The phenomenon was everywhere repeated of types of

research of more or less subsidiary significance assuming that reform of political economy depends exclusively upon their results, while they denied the legitimacy of every other type of investigation. The endeavor to remove the unsatisfactory condition of political economy by inaugurating new schemes of investigation led, in Germany, to a series of partly mistaken, partly onesided conceptions of the nature of our science, to conceptions which segregated German national economy from the literary movement of all the other peoples. Indeed the onesidedness of those German innovators in particular cases made them unintelligible to foreign economists.

This being the situation, it scarcely need be said that a reform of political economy upon the above suggested universal bases did not come within the range of the German reformers' ideas. Among all the representatives of the above characterized tendencies not one has appeared who seems to be capable of comprehending the totality of the tasks which a science of the laws of economics must solve; not one capable of understanding the several types of theoretical research as legitimate branches of a complete theoretical science of economics; not one who could appreciate the relations of such a science to the other non-theoretical branches of research within the economic field. Indeed, not even an effort to arrive at such a universal conception of the methodological problem has anywhere come to light. Instead, we find everywhere partly mistaken, partly in themselves legitimate, schemes of procedure, more or less incidental, however, in comparison with the totality of political economy, each one of which nevertheless identifies itself with research in the field of economics in general.

The real fatality in the present status of political economy in Germany however, is this—not in the circumstance that the self appointed reformers, with all their confidence, have not succeeded in finding a remedy for the defective condition of our science, not in the fact that in pursuit of relatively subordinate purposes these reformers have lost sight of the main desiderata of economic investigation, and even in some measure of the science itself. The actual core of the evil is in the badly concealed depreciation and systematic negation of all the other types of research, not infrequently of those very types which, from the standpoint of the totality of our science have proved to be the most significant.

This being the case, it follows that one of the times has arrived in which methodological researches in political economy of necessity come into the foreground of scientific interest. The progress of our science is arrested today by the dominance of erroneous methodological principles. Methodology accordingly has the floor, and will hold it until clarity has been achieved about the aims of investigation and the ways of reaching them.

As to the findings which I have reached, I do not find it necessary to add anything here. I have set them forth in the simplest language possible. They must speak for themselves. One further observation, however, I cannot repress.

This monograph is quite largely polemical in character. I am aware of it. Not in a single passage did it spring from ill will toward meritorious representatives of our science. It arose rather from the nature of the task which I undertook. It was a necessary consequence of my conception of the present condition of political economy in Germany. Agitation against the tendency at present chiefly controlling political economy in Germany was not for me an end in itself, nor was it a mere external gratuity. It was an essential part of my task. It needed to be penetrating and thorough, even at the peril of wounding certain sensibilities.

If this interferes with the external success of my monograph, at least temporarily, I should not find fault. The modern economics of Germany is little enough noticed at best in other countries. It is scarcely intelligible to them in its essential tendencies. In its decades of persisting isolation it was uninfluenced by serious opponents. Moreover its inveterate confidence in its own methods cost it to a considerable extent the advantage of severe self-criticism. Whoever in Germany followed another flaw was ignored rather than refuted. Accordingly long usage had developed a methodological phraseology which was in part literally nonsensical, a phraseology which affected the development of political economy in Germany the more unfortunately as, unaffected by all serious criticism, it was thoughtlessly repeated. Indeed it went so far as to claim for itself the merit of having brought about an epoch-making reconstruction of our science. Under such circumstances the first thing needful was unprejudiced circumspection and candid criticism. Much was to be done which had previously been neglected.

Yet the unbiased reader will at once be aware how little it was in my mind to depreciate my German colleagues. I have never failed to do justice, to the best of my knowledge, to the merits of others, and even in cases where I had to oppose what seemed to me their errors. . . . My guide had been the thought of reawakening consciousness in Germany of the essential tasks of political economy, to rescue it from fatal one-sidedness, to free it from its isolation from the general literary movement, and thus to promote the reform that is so much needed.

Each of the great civilized peoples has its peculiar mission in the development of the sciences, and each confusion among the scholars of a nation, or in a considerable portion of them, leaves a gap in the evolution of scientific understanding. Political economy is no exception to the rule that purposeful

co-operation of the German mind is needed. The unqualified purpose of this argument is to bring the German mind back to its proper attitude towards economic problems.

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*Chapter II.* On the errors which have arisen from ignoring the formal nature of theoretical national economy.

*Chapter III.* The special nature of theoretical cognitions in the field of economics does not abolish the character of national economy as a theoretical science.

*Chapter IV.* On the two fundamental types of research in general, economic research in particular.

*Chapter V.* On the relation of the exact to the realistico-empirical type of economic investigation.

*Chapter VI.* On the theory that economic phenomena should be treated as inseparable from the entire social and civic development of peoples.

*Chapter VII.* On the dogma of self-interest in theoretical economics and its relation to the epistemological problems of the latter.

*Chapter VIII.* On the charge of "atomism" in theoretical economics.

BOOK II. *On the historical viewpoint in political economy.*

*Introduction.*

*Chapter I.* On the historical viewpoint in theoretical national economy.

*Chapter II.* On the pseudo-historical types of research in theoretical national economy.

*Chapter III.* On the historical viewpoint in the practical sciences of economics.

BOOK III. *The Organic Interpretation of Social Phenomena.*

*Chapter I.* On the analogy between social phenomena and natural organisms, the boundaries of the same, and the resulting methodological viewpoints for social research.

*Chapter II.* On the theoretical interpretation of those social phenomena which are not produced by convention, nor by positive legislation, but are the unpremeditated outcome of historical development.



BOOK IV. *On the development of the Idea of a historical political economy.*

*Chapter I.* That the fundamental idea of the historical school of German economists has been familiar time out of mind in the political sciences.

*Chapter II.* That the historical school of German economists misunderstood the standard reform ideas of the historical school of jurisprudence, and they are in error in thinking that they have a right to call themselves a historical school in the same sense.

*Chapter III.* On the origin and development of the historical school of German economists.

#### APPENDICES

1. On the nature of economics.
2. On the category "theoretical national economy."
3. On the relation between the practical sciences of economics to practice of the same and to theoretical economics.
4. On the terminology and the classification of the economic sciences.
5. That in the realm of human phenomena exact laws (so-called "Natural Laws") are ascertainable under the same formal preconditions as in the case of natural phenomena.
6. That the starting point and the goal of all human economy are precisely determined.
7. On the opinion credited to Socrates that the phenomenon of the state is aboriginal, given contemporarily with the existence of man.
8. On the "organic" origin of law and the exact understanding of the same.
9. On the so-called ethical tendency in political economy.

We reserve further comments upon the two tendencies until we have indicated some of the peculiarities of the second variant to which we refer in Section XIII, "The Ethical Factor," p. 479.

This is a favorable point for a halt in our survey in order to orient ourselves within the whole field of knowledge which we are trying to plot.

It is well frequently to recall certain elementary conceptions, for instance, the problems of knowledge in general have four cardinal aspects, viz., the problems: (a) of *understanding*, (b) of *prevision*, (c) of *control*, and (d) of *evaluation*. That is, not referring to either logical or chronological order, in every division of the field of knowledge human interests prompt curiosity to find out just

what takes place, not merely as a detached fact, or a countable number of facts, but what has occurred in terms of why it occurred, that is, in terms of the causes which worked themselves out in the occurrence.

Beyond this, whether there are good and sufficient reasons for further mental drive or not, our minds simply do not stop when they seem to have arrived at answers to this fundamental question. At any rate the minds of all of us do not stop at that point. Sooner or later the minds of some of us actually press on to the further question: How much does explanation of previous occurrences enable us to predict about how the same causes will act in the future?

Nor do our minds stop with answers to the second type of question. Whether we are fully conscious of it or not, somebody's mind always does press toward proposal and solution of the further problem: Given such knowledge as we have gathered about the causes that do work or may work within the field of our inquiry, what resources are within our reach, or what resources may be brought within our reach to enable us partially or wholly to control these causes, and other causes which may be discovered, in the interest of human purposes?

Still further, some adventurous minds refuse to be content unless they are pressing on into inquiries about the ultimate measure of the worth of activities urged by our derived estimates of value. Whatever we may think about it, these phases of the action of rational minds recur wherever minds are free to follow their impulses. From the consequent behavior of our minds through long periods, our "sciences," such as they are, come into existence. We are in a mystified state about the nature of science in general, unless we realize that every department of it has gone through many cycles of these four aspects. Science as we know it today, either as a whole, or in some selected division, is passing through a variation of that cycle. In all probability reconstruction of knowledge in one or all of these aspects will go on to the end of time.

We have been plotting one of these cycles, or more accurately, interconnected parts of several of these cycles, in the career of social science. We have been dealing principally with the workings of the cognitive faculty in its attempts to answer the first type of question in the field of human experience. We have been reviewing the ways in which certain specialists in Germany since 1800 have tried to answer the questions: How may we find out what has occurred? How may we find out why it occurred, within the field of human experience? We have selected so far specialists whom we would class as either historians or political scientists or economists. We have found that all of these men were in a more or less unstable state of mind as to the adequacy of the methods which they were using, even to answer the questions of knowledge proper, not to speak of solving the problems of prevision, and control and evaluation. Especially were these men critical toward methods used by other scientists, even if they were somewhat complaisant about their own procedure.

When we look back from our present standpoint to the contentions of social scientists only a decade or two ago, and the farther back we look the more evident the fact, we see that a process of reciprocating education was occurring between many men of many minds. No one of them comes very near to satisfying us that his scheme of investigation could be taken over as sufficient to solve all social problems, or even to arrive at conclusive answers to problems of the first aspect—not to say of the other three aspects. Yet we find that something is to be said for each of the inadequate methods which scientific sectarians respectively represent. As a rule, each of them speaks for a course of procedure which is valid and important, under necessary limitations, at certain times and places in the conduct of scientific investigation. The characteristic fallacy of each of them is the assumption that the particular mental tool, or the particular kit of tools, which it features, is the one and only outfit useful and adequate for exhasutive investigation in all reaches of scientific problems.

It turns out then that the very exaggerations of these pioneers in methodology are a precious heritage for us. Their zeal in recommending and defending their own methods, and in disparaging and attacking the methods of others, has magnified the merits and defects of the several scientific schemes, so that each research generation has inherited means of somewhat more objective judgment, both as to fact and as to method, than earlier scholars controlled.

We are now observing the foregoing in the illustration furnished already and in the further campaign of the Austrian School, in its clash with the earlier historical school.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE ETHICAL FACTOR IN GERMAN ECONOMIC THEORY<sup>1</sup>

Again we are signalizing a tendency, not alleging that a given person represented a given ratio of the force of the tendency. Knies was a part of the variant now to be recognized. He uttered in the preserve of the German version of British classicism the disturbing thesis that political economy can never be an approximately conclusive theory unless it enlarges its scope and makes itself a *theory of persons in their varied activities*. Essentially, if not in so many words, this theorem was an assertion that political economy cannot be conclusive until it consciously and deliberately reorganizes itself as a moral science. Although it will carry us nearly two decades beyond a point to which we must presently return, to take up the political science factor in developing sociological consciousness, it is in order to follow the fortunes of the historical, the psychological, and the ethical movements to a somewhat later stage before we recur to the political scientists. At this point we may listen to Knies as he speaks in the Preface of the edition of his book published in 1883. It must be remembered in this connection that the Historical School had itself passed through great changes in the forty years since Roscher's *Grundriss* was published.

The publication of this new edition calls for a special explanation. When I sent from Schaffhausen to my publisher at home the preface of my book dated New Years day 1853, I was filled with the joyous hope that it would not be long before I should have to consider what I wanted to say in the preface to a second edition. This was a serious mistake, and the small number of purchasers of my book for many years did not represent the sum of my disappointments. For whatever might have been my failures in exposition, or

<sup>1</sup> Knies, *Politische Oekonomie vom geschichtlichen Standpunkte*, 1853.



my faults in bringing new and difficult subjects into the discussion, the things which received such meager attention were at all events in my judgment the most significant questions for political economy, and my book was the first to discuss them methodically. To me it seemed of the highest importance that political economy should, on the one hand, brush aside questions both of private expediency and abstract theorizing, in order to cultivate its own proper field of research; that it should, further, recall the original connection between economic phenomena and the other important departments of associated human life, and finally that it should take notice of that development which was taking place in contemporary life in all these departments alike. Was all this of trifling importance, as seemed to be indicated by the fact that specialists in these subjects said never a word about it? I regarded it as quite new when I urged that science should rise above the equally partisan attitudes not merely of the traditional theories in support of free trade or protection, but also of the capitalistic and socialistic programs. Was the academic reviewer right when he labelled my whole exposition *Eclecticism*, and referred the whole matter to an ancient and well recognized specialty? [Cameralism.]<sup>1</sup> I had expected that lively discussion would be aroused by my "tentative formulation" of my conception of political economy,<sup>2</sup> by my discussion of private property, then for the first time taken up as a part of economic theory, and by other innovations. Since I was humiliated by the failure of any such response, did it prove that the subjects themselves were intrinsically so unimportant? Presently I was embarrassed by another circumstance which hindered people who were unfriendly to the "historical method" from becoming acquainted with the book. Even Wilhelm Roscher (to whom the book was dedicated, and whom I treated with great respect, in spite of calling attention to matters upon which I could not agree with him) gave me scant notice in his book published the following year

<sup>1</sup> The *Century Dictionary*, title "eclectic," has the following definition:

"One who in whatever department of knowledge, not being convinced of the fundamental teachings of any existing system, culls from the teachings of different schools such doctrines as seem to him probably true, conformable to good sense, wholesome in practice, or recommended by other secondary considerations; one who holds that opposing schools are right in their distinctive doctrines, wrong only in their opposition to one another."

From classic times down there have been notable schools of professed eclectics.

On the other hand, it has always been a favorite mode of "damnation by label" for the opponents of any scheme of thought to fix on it the epithet "eclecticism." As a term of contempt it has always carried the charge that the thinking to which it applied amounted to intellectual Chop-sueyism. Knies survived this charge, and his name is among the most honored in the ranks of nineteenth century German economists.

<sup>2</sup> This passage will be quoted presently.

[*Grundlagen der Nationalökonomie*]. He observed—"Only a single work has appeared on the question of the method." Perhaps a like fate is to befall me now, since Roscher said later in his *Nationalökonomie in Deutschland*, p. 1038:

"The economic theory of Knies is in such vital correlation with ethics, that he does not regard self-love as properly in antithesis with love of one's neighbor. At the same time Knies was the first to develop the historical method of our science into a rich methodology, equipped with finely developed examples. Meanwhile he avoids both of the chief pitfalls which threaten historical treatment of an ethical science: first, the danger of untheoretical diffusiveness among abstract ideas; then, second, the not less impractical neglect of the new and peculiar elements which each contemporary period actually brings into being. He warns most emphatically against that sort of mere looking backward, in which that which in the present is already attained, or even that which in the present is aimed at, is regarded as the absolute thinkable consummation and which assigns to all coming generations the rôle of monkeys or ruminants" [*Wiederkauer*].<sup>1</sup>

Knies continues:

In the further lapse of years, during which time, in consequence of my participation in legislative and administrative activities, I was temporarily withdrawn from literary work, my book seems to have been almost entirely forgotten. This is evident from the fact that gradually many of the questions which it discussed were proposed by others as though they had never been presented before.

On the other hand, several years ago an entirely new demand for the book arose, so that the entire edition of 1853 has been for some time exhausted. The demand, however, continues. I have therefore been urged repeatedly to prepare a second edition with the usual revision; but I have as often hesitated before the undertaking. The book seemed to me so complete in itself, so unique, unified and firmly articulated, that I could think of it as capable of expansion by further work of specialists, but not as lending itself to reconstruction after a new model. On the other hand, in all its chief contents it is by no means obsolete. I wish only that it might be read as it is, especially by students, along with the text-books, and by publicists. . . . according to the text of the edition of 1853 has remained in this edition without essential change. . . .

The remainder of the Preface explains the minor variations of the second from the first edition.

<sup>1</sup> The figure is more apparent in German than in Latin.

We pass to certain quotations from the introduction:<sup>1</sup>

"By the designation *Political Economy* we mean to include all those disciplines which in Germany have been associated under the names *Volkswirtschaftslehre*, or *Nationalökonomie*, *Volkswirtschaftspolitik*, and *Finanzwissenschaft*." Then Knies refers to such terms as *Haushaltung*, *Wirtschaftsführung*, etc., for which we have no precisely equivalent English terms. All that it is necessary here to do with these terms is to point out by means of them that a tremendous amount of dissection of industrial processes, and invention of adequate terms to designate different phases of those processes, and different theoretical correlations of the processes, had been going on since Adam Smith advertised the necessity of studying what in his mind were relatively simple and independent phenomena, viz., "the science which treats of the production, distribution and exchange of commodities."<sup>2</sup> The phenomena to be examined had come to have aspects which Knies indicates in this way:<sup>3</sup>

From the phrase "Political Economy" several significant inferences are to be drawn, e.g., 1. When our task is to treat a scientific theory about "*Haushaltung*" and "*Wirtschaftsführung*," we have to do at all events with human transactions, human conditions, and tasks making for realization of human purposes; i.e., a segment out of the entire area of human life and endeavor.

The portion of human life which is to be designated as the area [*Gebiet*] of industrial [*wirtschaftlich*] phenomena is, to be sure, set apart from other life areas by the fact that in the industrial area there are present peculiar types of things, or objects, such as wood, grain, iron, apart from the human persons. These things come into view under the designation *economic goods*. But since we are dealing not with a theory of things but with a theory of thrift, these corporeal objects are to be considered . . . only in so far as they are objects

<sup>1</sup> We keep repeating that these extracts are worth while because they represent the transition in German thinking from the classical conception that there can be a science of *wealth*, to the modern conception that there can be no science of wealth which is not *more* than a science of wealth, viz., a science of *people*.

<sup>2</sup> *Wealth of Nations*, Introd., p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> What follows is significant as *economic and moral perceptions in the making*. In such a passage as the following we have the record of the birth of ideas which in our times are commonplace. The original is somewhat condensed in our translation.

of human desire and of human manipulation, and may be employed as means for the satisfaction of human wants.

2. If the thrift activities [*wirtschaftlich*] of men are the subject matter, i.e., occurrences which are characteristic of house-keeping [*Haushaltung*], it follows that the questions of technique, as such, do not belong to political economy, i.e., discussions about the art of external manipulation most useful in producing material goods. . . .

3. The subject matter of political economy must be not mere theory of thrift [*Wirtschaft*], but it must be a theory of political thrift. This must be considered in two aspects:

(a) The crucial matter is not the modern question of discrimination between political or civic relations on the one hand, and social [*sociale*] or societary [*gesellschaftliche*] relations on the other. . . . Let it suffice for us to indicate here that the phrase "political economy" must likewise mean "social economy."

(b) Political or politico-social economy must be distinguished from all those investigations which have to do with occurrences peculiar to special economic techniques, and to private economies. Examples of the latter are, the theory of agriculture, of trade, of horticulture, of stock-breeding, etc., etc.

4. Within the entire field of the political and social sciences the peculiar province of political and social economics, or the theory of thrift, of economic needs and of economic activities, is to be distinguished from needs, activities occurrences and conditions of other sorts.

The general relation between political economy as a member of the group of civic and societary sciences, and the other great groups of sciences, may be expressed as follows:

1. The Psychical sciences.
2. The Natural sciences.
3. The Historical sciences.

We may again interject the observation that all of this attempt to define the field of economic theory was on the one hand persistence in the immemorial endeavor after the impossible, viz., the effort to organize science on the basis of the assumption that the different objects of knowledge are things, which either exist as tenants of so many distinct spatial locations, or which may be segregated for scientific purposes in distinct portions of space. This illusion served intellectual purposes fairly well until quite recently, and comparatively few scholars even now have consciously and explicitly repudiated the illusion as their fundamental working

hypothesis. In spite of all that was done by forward looking thinkers, of whom Knies was a notable example, the basis for objective treatment of human relations was not secure until social scientists had gradually broken with the old notion that these human relations are THINGS, with geometrical boundaries. The substitute conception which is our present point of departure is that in their elements all human relations are *modes of human behavior*. They are always in which human beings in all their many-sidedness conduct themselves. They are procedures which have their impulses in the whole composite of human interests, and which have some relations to the whole gamut of human conditions. The resulting form of the entire range of problems in social science is, How do human activities work together? How are they purposefully or accidentally organized? How does this actual interworking of activities function with reference to the explicit or implicit interests of the human beings concerned? This formulation, however, represents the outcome at which the whole thought process that we are now retracing has at present arrived. We are dealing with a stage of the process in which this aspect of the scientific problem had not appeared above the horizon of scholars.

It will be instructive to review Knies' further attempt to define the outlook of political economy. He says (p. 23):

Up to the present time the historical development of political economy has been brought to the attention of scholars only as subject matter for *historical* investigation and exhibition. To be sure, it was in the necessary order of things that the attention of historians would sooner or later have to be extended to the realm of *economic* phenomena, because epochs and peoples have expressed themselves in these phenomena both characteristically and substantially. At the same time, the question was to be expected: What is the good of hunting up historical evidences of theoretical opinions, aims and methods of argumentation which prevailed in earlier times? We are beyond all those things now, and we need only smile and shake our heads over them. . . . This volume will go into particulars in answer to that question. . . . At this point I reply in a general way that imperfect knowledge of the ways in which both economic conditions and economic theories have developed has had unfortunate effects upon the attitude of political economists and upon their conclusions. . . .



In an earlier passage in this book the expression *historical development of political economy* is used in a sense which makes it a formula for a scientific theorem. The conception of political economy which underlies this theorem is in antithesis with the notion indicated by the phrase *The Absolutism of Theory*. I understand by that notion the claim that economic *theory* affords something unqualified, true in one and the same way of all times, places and nationalities. . . .

In contrast with the idea of the *absolutism of theory*, the historical conception of political economy rests upon the following basis:

Like economic conditions themselves, so also the *theory* of political economy, whatever be its form and structure at a given time, whatever be the arguments and results which it urges, is an outcome of historical development. These conditions and this theory are in vital articulation with the entire organism [*Gesamtorganismus*] of a human and historical epoch. They grow out of the peculiarities of the time, the place, the nationality. They have their being, and continue their growth along with these peculiarities of time, place, nationality. They have their assets for argumentation in the historical experience upon which they can draw. They must assign to their results the character of historical solutions. They cannot exhibit the "universal laws of political economy" in any other way than as a historical explication and a progressive manifestation of the truth. These "laws" must be expressed at every stage as the generalization of such truths as have been recognized *up to a given point* of the development. Neither in their totality nor in their formulation may they be regarded as something final. Wherever, at a given stage, the supposed "absolutism of theory" has been accepted, either as assumption or as effective influence. The idea itself is merely a child of its time, and it characterizes a definite period in the historical development of political economy.

Knies adds:

While I am at this point formulating this conception of political economy in only the most general preliminary way, and must leave elaboration of it to later portions of the book, I am encouraged by the thought that many seeds of this conception have already been planted by a portion of my contemporary economists in Germany. At the same time it must be recognized that the absolutism of the doctrine has been the paramount conception in the most notable economic writings of the recent past, as well as in significant works of the present.

It will be instructive also to read the estimate of the Historical School which Roscher published more than 30 years after the appearance of his *Grundriss*:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte der National-Oekonomie in Deutschland*, 1874, p. 1032.

The prevailing tendency in our universities at the present time (1874) may rightfully be called realistic. It attempts to take men *as they are*, moved at one and the same time by various motives, and not entirely by economic motives with the differences which go along with the facts that they are members respectively of a given race, state, epoch, etc. The abstraction from all this which has led so many, even great, economic thinkers, into gross errors, is consequently permissible, from our present outlook, only by way of preliminary orientation. It is as sterile for complete theory as it is for practical application.

If this tendency [i.e., the realistic] is to be followed out consistently, it must become historical. It is indeed the essence of history to comprehend as one whole the uninterrupted course of change in human needs, capacities, opinions and conditions. The historical method has exercised an equally significant influence upon the ways of formulating both the fundamental questions of economics as well as of other sciences, namely: (a) *What is?* and (b) *What should be?* What is man [*der Mensch*] in the economic realm, how does he work, what does he need, what does he attain? In this connection we no longer believe in the abstract man, as he was conceived in the minds of the old teachers of natural rights, before the era of recorded history. This old interpretation was full of arbitrary and self-deceiving presumptions, of which a very common one was that of assuming as a matter of course the outstanding peculiarities of their own period. The "average man" whom Quetelet tried to find by statistical methods turns out to be at best only the rather lifeless and by no means exemplary contemporary of the statistical observer. In this connection the historical method in economic theory has at least this advantage, that it is never in the dark about its limitations, and consequently it is on its guard against neglect to extend the scope of its observations.

As to the other question, what economic laws, devices, etc., are the best; every one with both practical and historical training will know that the needs of people vary with time and place. It is certain that men do not exist for the sake of the laws and the devices, but the laws and devices for the sake of the men! What is strictly appropriate for one condition, would be quite impossible for another situation.

The most important differences, for our purpose, between peoples and times may be referred back to two chief categories: (1) *National character*, (2) *stage of development*. We should probably add a third category, viz., *the place which the people and period in question occupy in the total development of mankind*. The trouble is, however, that this third factor is at present so obscure, and thus so debatable, that our science up to the present time has had to occupy a negative attitude in place of premature conclusions, and has been able on the positive side to base very little of its results upon this factor. At all events, historical political economy has had a clear consciousness of the relativity of most of its

tentative publications, and this protects the method from a multitude of ill-advised projects in practice, into which it might be misled by doctrinaire arrogance.<sup>1</sup>

This historico-realistic tendency might also be called *ethical*. In developing or assimilating this factor, the science returns, in loftier and more timely form, to its beginnings. At first the national economists asked the question, "*What is permissible?*" The answer was framed in terms which depended upon the prevailing influence of the era, i.e., it was fundamentally *theological*, or *legal*, or *philosophical*. Presently the question came into the foreground, "*What is expedient?*" When this occurred, it at once became necessary to observe the deeper implications of the concept expediency. It was necessary to pass from consideration of expediency from the point of view of a particular government, or of a given individual, to the expediency of a whole people; and not for the passing moment merely, but for the future. Thus the ethical standpoint was more and more brought into the foreground. The demands of intelligent selfishness approach nearer to the demands of conscience, the greater the circle is whose expediency is taken into consideration, and the farther we extend our view into the future.

The tendency thus characterized has by some been called *The Statistical School*. This designation, however, signalized no real antithesis to the historical tendency; but it merely emphasizes peculiarly precise use of sources which have only recently become available in rich quantities. . . .

The main thing in all these cases is that the interpreter shall have such many sided and re-creative imagination that he can transfer himself into the soul of those people whose activities or passivities he proposes to depict and evaluate. I cannot go so far as the majority in expressing the contrast between the inductive and the deductive method in national economy; although I concur in the view that we may not speak of an economic fact as fully explained unless its inductive and its deductive interpretations coincide. But even the deductive explanation of economic facts rests in reality upon observation; that is, upon the personal observations of the interpreter, who must always ask, consciously or unconsciously: If I had experienced or brought to pass the same fact, what would have been my own thoughts, volitions or emotions in the course of the occurrence? Any one who is totally incapable of transferring himself into the soul of another will misinterpret most economic occurrences. For instance, in the case of a fixing of prices, any one who can put himself in the place of only one or the bargaining parties, will give a one-sided explanation.

<sup>1</sup> Roscher himself was accused of most spectacular sins of this sort in his *Pol. Econ: System der Volkswirtschaft*, 1854.

Moreover, an explanation is a satisfactory connecting-up of the fact, to be explained, with other facts. Every explanation must accordingly be merely a tentative explanation. In the degree in which our field of vision widens, must our explanations also reach out to larger connections. A hundred years hence, if science meanwhile grows, people will look down upon the explanations which satisfy us, somewhat as we look down on those of the time of Adam Smith.

It is everywhere a rich, many sided life, full of ripe fruits and promising blossoms, which this historical tendency in national economy opens up to our view. In what follows, we can speak only with brevity and without attempt at completeness. . . .

Thereupon follow bibliographical fragments which turn out to be decidedly out of focus from our present point of view. In spite of this fact, one item in Roscher's estimation appears to coincide rather closely with the judgment of a later generation.<sup>1</sup>

In this connection a passage may be quoted from the essay written in 1857, by M. Wolowski, member of the Institute of France, and used as an introduction to the American translation of Roscher's *Political Economy*.

From the moment that science concerns itself with man only, and the action of the mind; from the moment that its end becomes not simply material enjoyment but moral elevation, the questions it discusses become indeed more complex, but the answer, when found, is more prolific in results. Wealth, then, is treated only as one of the forces of civilization. Other interests than purely material ones occupy the first place. This matter-of-fact philosophy, which, according to Bacon's precept, seeks to improve the conditions of life, bears in mind that the most fruitful source of material development lies in intellectual development. It humbly recognizes that it is not the first-born of the family, and draws new strength from this avowal. From the moment that it is the mind which produces and which governs the world, intellectual and moral perfection become the cause and effect of material progress. "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you!"

"The increase of production, then, appears an instrument of elevation in the moral order "(Channing).

<sup>1</sup> A note on Knies, p. 1038; quoted above.

## CHAPTER XIV

### LATER PHASES OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE HISTORICAL AND THE AUSTRIAN SCHOOLS

We have now to consider, first, Menger's more detailed criticism of the Historical School; second, Schmoller's rejoinder in defense of the Historical School, in *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung*, VII (1883), 975; *Zur Methodologie der Staats- und Socialwissenschaften*; third, Menger's reply to Schmoller, *Die Irrthümer des Historismus*, 1884.

In the stage of scientific development in which these publications were incidents, the German economists were adding cubits to their own stature as specialists, while they were increasing one another's blood pressure by advertising the inadequacies of one another's methods of economic investigation. The upshot of it all for sociologists was cumulative evidence that somehow or other past human experience contains clues to present human experience and to all human experience. The German economists who most stressed this view, those who least stressed it, and those who seemed to challenge it peremptorily—although this seeming was probably never in a single case in accordance with the literal fact—all these fought for or against increased emphasis upon historical factors in economic reasoning. The truth seems to be that the fight was so hot, principally because no one was able to make perfectly clear to anybody else just what this "historical viewpoint," or "historical method" was, which he advocated or opposed. To this day, there is no definition, accepted by friends and foes alike, of what the "historical method in political economy" actually involves. Meanwhile every economist today makes some use of history in arriving at his conclusions in the realm of economic theory.



At this distance it seems improbable that the historical movement in German economic theory would ever have aroused the degree and kind of antagonisms which it actually generated if its earlier representatives had been able to think through, a little more clearly than they did, the kinds of historical evidence which would be most useful in solving contemporary problems of economic theory and practice; or if they had more clearly visualized the objective problems themselves. The immediate test of such propositions as we have quoted from Roscher was necessarily the use to which they were actually put. Unfortunately Roscher himself did not make a strong impression as an organizer of evidence. As we have intimated, his chief work, *Grundlagen der National Oekonomie* (first ed., 1874)<sup>1</sup> seemed to the traditional economists a hopeless collection of historical rubbish. To systematizers of all sorts the claim that such scatterings could be "science" was necessarily an offense. It was this aspect of the case which must have been chiefly in Menger's mind when he published the criticism of the historical school which called Schmoller to its defense.

Without further comment, the case of the Austrian School against the historical tendency may be allowed to rest upon the following evidence, i.e., "Menger on the Historical School."

#### MENGER ON THE HISTORICAL SCHOOL

In his *Untersuchungen* (1883), Book II, pp. 93-138, Menger devotes 46 out of the total 291 pages in the whole volume to discussion of the title: "On the Historical Viewpoint for Investigation in Political Economy." The following is a condensation of his argument:

In the previous book we have set forth the essential difference between the historical, the theoretical, and the practical sciences of public thrift [*Volks-wirtschaft*] and we have called special attention to the errors of those who see in political economy a "historical science."

<sup>1</sup> Table of Contents, *supra*, pp. 159 ff.

To do justice to Menger's argument, it is necessary to recapitulate the analysis to which he refers. In Book I he presents the following brief:

The phenomenal world may be considered from two essentially different points of view. The object of our scientific interest may be either the concrete phenomena, in their location in time and space and in their specific relations to one another, or the forms of manifestation which recur in course of the changes in the concrete phenomena.<sup>1</sup> If the first tendency dominates, the search is for knowledge of the concrete, or more correctly the individual case, the latter search is for that which is general in the phenomena. Accordingly we have these two great classes of scientific knowledge. We may name the one individual, the other general.

The nature of the interest which the human mind takes in knowledge of the individual phenomena, and the significance of the same for practical life are obvious and familiar; likewise the formal character of the results which search for the individual obtains. The character and significance of the other kind of research are not so evident to the ordinary understanding, and it is consequently in order to begin with a few observations on the importance of the general type of knowledge, with reference to the nature of the theoretical sciences, and the antithesis between them and the historical sciences.

In spite of the great variety of the concrete phenomena, even casual observation shows that there is not a separate form of manifestation peculiar to each case. Experience teaches us further that given phenomena recur now with greater now with lesser precision. We call these forms of manifestation *types*. The like is true of the *relationships* between the concrete manifestations. For instance, the phenomena *trade, money, demand, supply, price, capital, rate of interest*, etc., etc., are typical within the economic realm; while typical *relationships* between these concretes are *rise and fall of prices* in connection with *increase and decrease of demand and supply*, *rise or fall of prices* in connection with *increase or decrease of the volume of the circulating medium*, the *fall of the interest rate* in connection with *relative abundance of capital*, etc., etc.

Investigation of the *types*, and of the *typical relationships* of phenomena is of immeasurable value for human life, not less than knowledge of the concrete phenomena themselves. Without knowledge of the *forms* of manifestation we should be powerless either to grasp or to systematize in our thoughts the myriads of concrete phenomena. Such knowledge is the *sine qua non* of all compre-

<sup>1</sup> Anyone who is familiar with the American sociological tradition will scarcely fail to recognize in this concept *forms of manifestation* an early expression of a conception which became one of the stock properties of our methodology.

hensive understanding of the real world. Without it all foresight and control of events would be impossible.

The foregoing applies first and foremost to occurrences and relationships in the economic field, whether in the division of private or public thrift. We must accordingly discriminate between individual and general types of knowledge about that field. To the first belong the *history* and *statistics* of thrift; to the second the *systematized theory* of thrift, or theoretical national economy.

The above discrimination is often indicated, although in a somewhat different sense, by the division between *historical* and *theoretical* sciences, economic history and statistics being placed under the former rubric and national economy under the latter.

In addition to the above we must notice the great group of the so-called practical, or technical sciences [*Kunstlehren*]. The task of these latter is to set in order the principles by observance of which things may be brought to pass. In the field of economics we must distinguish then, first, the historical sciences and statistics; second, theoretical national economy; third, the technologies of thrift.

By *political economy* we shall understand that aggregate of theoreticopractical sciences of popular thrift [*die theoretische Nationalökonomie, die Volkswirtschaftspolitik und die Finanzwissenschaft*] which are today ordinarily assembled under the above head.<sup>1</sup>

The second chapter is on the errors which are consequent upon misapprehension of the formal nature of theoretical national economy. Menger continues (p. 11):

Before taking up the problem of the nature and significance of the so-called historical viewpoint in political economy, we must notice the errors which have sprung from misapprehension of the formal nature of political economy and of its status within the circuit of the sciences in general. We insist on the following considerations, not merely because the mistake and its consequences have been peculiarly apparent among German economists, but also because, as will later appear, the mistake is largely an incident of the attempt, quite legitimate in itself, but hitherto confused and misguided, to make the historical viewpoint available in our science. We shall notice first the confusion between historical and theoretical research in the field of economics, and then the similar confusion between the theoretical and practical economic sciences.

Recurring to our distinction between the *individual* and the *typical* and sciences of the same, we specify: there are concrete acts, fortunes [*Schicksale*]

<sup>1</sup> Menger has an interesting note (*op. cit.*, p. 10) on the first use of the term *Politische Oekonomie* by Vateville (1615).

institutions of given peoples and states, there are concrete cultural developments and conditions, the investigation of which is the task of history and statistics, while the theoretical social sciences have the task of exhibiting to us the *forms of manifestation* of the social phenomena, and the *laws* of their succession, their coexistence, etc.

The antithesis between the historical and the theoretical sciences is still more evident if we bring it to our consciousness in the case of a given kind of phenomena. If we choose for this purpose economic phenomena, the task of theoretical investigation in this field is obviously that of determining the forms of manifestation and the laws of the *types* and of the typical relationships among economic phenomena. We work at the extension of theoretical national economy if we carry on the attempt to determine the recurring forms of manifestation of economic phenomena, for example, the general nature of exchange, of prices, of ground rent, of supply, of demand; or the typical relations between such phenomena, for example, the effect of the rise or fall of supply and demand upon prices, the effect of increasing population upon ground rent, etc., etc.

On the other hand, the historical sciences of economics reveal to us the nature and development of specific economic phenomena, for example, the condition or the development of the industry of a given people, or of a given racial group, of a given economic institution, the development of prices, or of ground rent in a given economic area, etc., etc.

Accordingly there is a fundamental difference between the theoretical and the historical sciences of economics. Only complete misapprehension of the true nature of these sciences could give rise to confusion of the one with the other, or could give room for the opinion that the one could be a substitute for the other. On the contrary, just as theoretical economics can never supply the place of the history or statistics of economic experience, so conversely even the most comprehensive studies in the fields of the two last named sciences cannot be made substitutes for generalizing economic theory without leaving a gap in the system of economic sciences.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A note on p. 13 adds: "For an instance of the confusion which follows disregard of the above most elementary distinction, cf. W. Roscher, *System der Volkswirtschaft*, I, 26, where the simple *description* first of the economic nature and needs of the people, second, of the laws and institutions which are intended to satisfy the latter, finally of the greater or lesser success of the devices in meeting the wants, is designated as the task of *theory*, and the results of this kind of research are characterized as *the anatomy and physiology of industry*! The latest writings of Knies, Schmoller, Held, and lately of Scheel (Vorrede zu Ingramis *Die notwendige Reform der Volkswirtschaftslehre*, Jena, 1879, p. vi) bear witness, moreover, that there is already among the Historical School a reaction against the misapprehension above indicated. It should be added

Nevertheless a succession of economic writers have imagined that they were dealing with national economy, while in reality they were dealing with historical studies in the field of economics. Such being the case, it is worth while to ask how it comes about that such a remarkable error has occurred. The following inquiries are dedicated to the answering of that highly practical question.

The aim of scientific research is not merely cognition [*Erkenntniss*] but also comprehension [*Verständniss*] of the phenomena. We know [*erkennen*] an object when a mental image of the same has been formed in our consciousness. We understand [*verstehen*] the same when we have found out the ground of its existence and of its peculiar composition [*den Grund ihres Seins und ihres So-Seins*].

Now we may in a two-fold manner arrive at comprehension of social phenomena.

We understand a concrete manifestation in specifically historical fashion (through the history) by bringing to our consciousness the concrete circumstances under which it came into being.

In what a high degree comprehension of a succession of significant social phenomena is promoted by investigation of the history of the same, i.e., in the specifically historical way, and in what creditable fashion German science has taken part in this work, is well known.<sup>1</sup>

It is scarcely necessary to say that the historical method, which in itself is quite legitimate, finds analogous application in the field of economics.

The historical understanding of concrete social phenomena is by no means the sole mode of scientific apprehension.<sup>2</sup> Rather is it confronted by its peer, the theoretical apprehension of social phenomena.

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that the confusion has been more evident in practice than in the formulations. The error is similar to that which, in the realm of legal science, identified the history of laws with historical jurisprudence in general."

<sup>1</sup> Menger proceeds to illustrate overemphasis upon the method by citing Savigny: "The material of law is given through the total past of the nations. . . . History is merely a collection of examples, but it is the *only* [!] way to true comprehension of our own conditions" (p. 15).

<sup>2</sup> Menger's note at this point is in part as follows: "Those who claim that the historical method in national economy is parallel with the same in jurisprudence, misapprehend the fact that the historical school of law recognizes no theoretical science of law in the strict sense, parallel with investigation of law in its concrete manifestations and in its historical development. To the historical school of law jurisprudence is wholly a historical science. The aim of the same is historical understanding of the law. By the side of this science, there is only legal dogmatics. In the field of eco-



We understand a concrete phenomenon in the *theoretical* way (i.e., on the basis of the corresponding *theoretical* sciences) when we comprehend the same as a special case of a certain regularity (according-to-law-ness) in the sequence or in the coexistence of the phenomena; or in other words, we arrive at consciousness of the ground of the existence and of the peculiarity of the nature of a concrete phenomenon by learning to recognize in it *solely* [*sic*] the exemplification of a regularity of phenomena—say, special cases of interest, rent, etc. as exemplifications of the *laws*, of ground rent, interest on capital, etc. Accordingly both history and the theory of social phenomena in general and of economics in particular put us in possession of a certain apprehension of social, or especially of economic phenomena. This apprehension is unique in either case. The two differ essentially. They differ as sharply, to be sure, as theory and history.

Another circumstance must be noticed which in a still higher degree contributes to the confusion already discussed, viz.: We must sharply distinguish between understanding of concrete phenomena of any sort whatever and the scientific *foundation* of this understanding; i.e., between the *theory* or the *history* of the respective phenomena and the *theory of economics*. No matter how carefully any one tries to arrive at theoretical understanding of the concrete phenomena of economics—perhaps on the basis of the prevailing theories—he is not for that reason a theorist of economics [*Theoretiker der Volkswirtschaft*]. Only he who undertakes the task of exhibiting the theory itself is entitled to that distinction. The understanding of the concrete phenomena *by means of the theory*, the application of theoretical national economy as *means* to this understanding, the use of theoretical national economy as an auxiliary to the history of economics—all these are rather the affair of the historian, for whom the theoretical social sciences, for reasons thus indicated are tributary sciences.

The gist of what has been said furnishes an easy answer to the question as to the essential nature of those errors into which the historical school of German economists has fallen, with respect to the conception of theoretical national

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nomics, on the contrary, even the most advanced protagonists of the historical program recognize a science of the general nature and laws of economic phenomena, a theory of the latter. Hence, so long as national economy retains its character as a *theoretical* science what the historical jurists are trying to do differs from what the economists are trying to do as history differs from theory, or rather as history differs from theory illuminated by historical studies. In spite of their common coat of arms the two schools are in profound methodological contrast. Mechanical transference of the postulates and research viewpoints from historical jurisprudence to our science is accordingly a procedure with which no methodologically trained investigator, if he gives the matter a little thought, can be in accord."

economy as a *historical* science. The clue is the failure to distinguish the specifically *historical* from the *theoretical* apprehension of economics, and the consequent mistaking of the one for the other. The historical school thinks it is building up and exhibiting the theory of economics when it is attempting to utilize either the history or the theory of economics for the understanding of concrete facts and developments in the economic realm.

Quite as great is the error of those who confuse theoretical national economy with *economic policy* [*Volkswirtschaftspolitik*], i.e., with the science of the maxims for proper guidance and promotion of economic activity. The error is comparable with confusion of chemistry with chemical technology, or physiology and anatomy with the arts of medicine and surgery.

The above facts have had peculiarly unfortunate effects upon research in the *methodology* of our subject. What value can the methodology of national economy seem to have in the minds of men who do not sharply distinguish between theoretical and practical national economy, i.e., between two sciences (the one theoretical, the other practical) which are of such different natures. Or what value can investigation of the methodology of national economy have when carried on by those whose idea of national economy is a theoreticopractical or theoretical economics, economic politics and the science of finance.

On the other hand the confusion between the historical and the theoretical outlook has led to mystifying consequences in German economic literature. For example, it has deranged our systems of presentation by interrupting the continuity of theory in order to introduce numberless historical excursions. It has embarrassed our technique (*Methodik*) by unadvisedly forcing into the procedure of theoretical national economy viewpoints and postulates of historical investigation.

It hardly needs to be said that, chiefly in consequence of this misunderstanding, research in the field of theoretical national economy is today well nigh sterile. *Historical* understanding of particular areas of economics has increased in recent decades; the *theory* of economics on the contrary has visibly lagged.

We would by no means minimize the merit of having emphasized the historical viewpoint as a matter of principle in theoretical political economy in general, and in theoretical public economy in particular, although as we shall see later, the form in which the idea has thus far come to expression has lacked both clarity and consistency. Nevertheless no unprejudiced person, however high his appraisal of the historical viewpoint in our science, can doubt that even the error of completely disregarding this factor is not distantly parallel, so far as the range of consequences is concerned, with the error of confounding theoretical national economy with the history of economics. The scholars who have committed this error have fallen into the most fundamental error, viz., of missing altogether the science which they intended to serve.

If theoretical national economy were already highly developed, or if it were at least in its fundamentals a completed science, criticism might be silent about the error we have pointed out. How is this possible, however, in dealing with a type of scholars who have become the victims of such a misapprehension in a science the bases of which are not yet assured, in which almost everything is still in debate!

How well a casual remark by the great founder of our science with reference to certain scientific systems fits the case of the investigators to whom we have referred: viz., "Systems which have universally owed their origin to the lucubrations of those who were acquainted with the one art, but ignorant of the other, who therefore explained to themselves the phenomena in that [art] which was strange to them by those [phenomena] in that [art] which was familiar to them."<sup>1</sup>

We now return to Menger's Book II, p. 93:

As we have said, the members of the so-called historical school of economists actually constitute theoretical national economy, economic policy and the science of finance into a theoretico-practical discipline. This is as genuine a blunder as it would be to subordinate the history or statistics of economics to the methodological views of the theoretical or practical sciences.

If there can be any question of a historical tendency in political economy, we cannot understand by it the transformation of political economy into a historical science. It can mean rather only a trend in research which holds fast to the fact of the development of social phenomena in the theoretical, or in the practical division of economic research, yet without betraying the character of political economy as a theoretico-practical science

Before we proceed to the solution of the problems here involved, it is necessary to reject a tacit assumption of those who have hitherto been occupied with these problems. It is an error of principle. Unless we are clear about it we can never quite understand the return of the historical viewpoint in our science. I refer to the error of supposing that the historical viewpoint in theoretical national economy is identical with the historical viewpoint in the practical sciences of economics, and that whatever is true of the historical type of research in the former, for that reason can be taken over bodily into treatment of the latter.

The sciences in question here are concerned indeed with the same area of human life. They are all sciences of economics. As we have seen in the previous book, however, their aims are quite different. The method of eco-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in the original (?) from Adam Smith, *History of Astronomy*, ed. by Dugald Stewart, Basel, 1799, pp. 28 ff.

nomic policy may no more be interchanged with the method of theoretical political economy than the method of the latter with that of history or statistics.

This being understood, it is at the same time clear that the fact of the development of economic phenomena, as we shall exhibit the same later, is by no means necessarily of the same influence upon the practical sciences of economics as upon theoretical national economy. The postulates of the historical viewpoint cannot therefore be carried over bodily into the latter and *vice versa*. The further consideration scarcely needs to be expressed, that the influence of the above fact upon theoretical economic doctrine on the one hand and upon the practical sciences of economy on the other can be determined only by way of a detached investigation which shall bring the tasks of the latter sciences into consideration from the historical point of view.

In theoretical economic systematics [*theoretische Volkswirtschaftslehre*] the historical viewpoint is brought into effect, through contemplation of the fact of the development of economic phenomena in its influence upon fixation of the forms of manifestation and the laws of economic particulars. In the theory of economic policy [*Volkswirtschaftspolitik*] the same viewpoint becomes influential through exhibit of the various stages of development of economic action in their effects upon the institutions and devices of the governing power intended to promote economic action. The national economic theorist makes the historical viewpoint influential when, in course of investigating the general nature and laws of economics, he keeps in sight the fact of the evolution of the phenomenon. So also the economic politician when he takes due account of the same relation. The difference between the two foregoing problems is so obvious that a confusion of these would really appear quite unthinkable. The reason why the confusion nevertheless so often occurs is in part in the erroneous conception of political economy as a formally unified science, and in the resulting effort to determine its method, rather than the *methods* of the formally quite different parts of which it is composed. More than that, not a small portion of the reason is to be found in a misunderstanding which must be briefly discussed.

The common element in the two problems just distinguished is to be found in the circumstance that both practical and theoretical economic doctrine [*Volkswirtschaftslehre*] concern themselves with the question whether *economic laws*, which correspond with a given evolutionary stage of concrete economic activity are also adequate for various evolutionary phases of the same. Not infrequently the fact is overlooked, however, that in the one case attention is primarily on *normative* laws (i.e., upon rules fixed by the state or by habit, to control men's actions); in the other case attention is primarily on laws of *phenomena* (i.e., regularities of coexistence and of sequence in economic phenomena). That is, two quite different sorts of things and ideas are in question in



the respective procedures. It is only an accident that they are indicated by the same term [law!] [*Gesetz*].

One may accordingly be of the opinion that various stages of the development of the state and of society in general and of economic action in particular are in correspondence with various normative economic laws and institutions, without for that reason necessarily being of the opinion—indeed without having an inkling that the opinion is indicated—that civic and societary phenomena in general, and that phenomena of economics in particular, *evolve* in the course of time, and that this circumstance touches the laws of succession and coexistence of these phenomena. In fact two distinct scientific questions are involved, of which only the latter relates to theoretical national economy and to the problem of preserving the historical viewpoint in the same. The former is concerned with preserving the historical viewpoint in economic politics [*Volkswirtschaftspolitik*].

A long succession of national-economic writers have treated political economy now as a formally unified science, and consequently have attempted to determine *the method* of this science. Again they have carried over the methodological viewpoint and postulates of theoretical national economy into the practical economic sciences, and *vice versa*. In particular they have conceived of the retention of the historical viewpoint in these two sciences as an identical methodological problem. All this is not less unfortunate for researches into the epistemology of our science than the mistaking of history for the theory of economics, the consequences of which for the methodology of political economy we have exhibited in the previous book.

Our task therefore cannot consist in determining in general the nature of the historical viewpoint in that totality of theoretical and practical sciences which we call political economy. We shall rather treat separately the two quite distinct methodological problems: viz., the determination of the historical viewpoint on the one hand in theoretical national economy, on the other hand in the practical sciences of economics.

But in the course of treating the problems here concerned we must determine a second not less important viewpoint. Theoretical research in the realm of economic action is not strictly unitary. It subdivides rather, as we have seen above, into two special tendencies. In spite of the circumstances that both attempt solution of the theoretical problem of research in the field of economic action, each manifests peculiarities not merely in respect to its approaches to knowledge. I am referring now to the *realistic* and the *exact* tendency in theoretical research, and it is thereby clear that determination of the historical viewpoint in each of these two directions must also lead to different cognitive problems.



To be sure, the question might arise whether the problem of determination of the historical viewpoint in political economy is of importance enough for our science to insure sufficient interest among scholars in the necessarily complicated and difficult investigations. Especially must this question press upon us in a book which is intended to destroy various illusions of the historical school of national economy, and at least to depress the relative significance of the same to a more modest level. Meanwhile if it should appear from the following that the historical viewpoint has far less significance than a succession of learned political economists have attributed to it, it still must not be overlooked that, in this book, dedicated to reform of the present condition of political economy in Germany, it is matter of course that things have to be evaluated not exclusively in accordance with their true worth, but also in accordance with the significance which has been attributed to them by our contemporaries. And what thought has gained greater weight in this sense than that of a historical tendency in our science!

Accordingly it is not our fault that we treat here at one and the same time the by no means insignificant, but still less weighty, along with the weightiest. The fault belongs to those who have made scientific problems of secondary significance the pilot of research in the field of economics, and have raised partnership with their one-sidednesses to the rank of sole touchstone of the worth or worthlessness of scientific performances. In referring to the one-sidednesses, the exaggerations and the errors of the historical school of German national economists, considering the present condition of political economy in Germany, we believe we are taking up the matter which is of the greatest weight for our science.

In the first chapter of Book II, under the title, "On the Historical Viewpoint in Theoretical National Economy," Menger proceeds in this way:<sup>1</sup>

It is a part of the nature of many phenomena to come into reality in a certain undeveloped form, to develop themselves gradually, after they have attained a certain maximum to follow a descending line, and finally to lose their peculiar character, in this sense to perish. Natural organisms are the most obvious illustrations, but the same observation is in point in the case of many social phenomena in general and economic phenomena in particular. Every separate laborer, as such, every concrete economic undertaking, every measure intended to promote economics, every group formation of economising people, is a case of this sort.

<sup>1</sup> Condensation continued.

Experience acquaints us with still another sort of development, of great importance for the theoretical sciences, political economy in particular, those manifestations which come to light not in the particular *concrete manifestations*, but in the respective manifestation-*forms*. Thus in the case of many groups of phenomena which typically recur, we may observe that the manifestation-forms of the same exhibit a gradual movement. This movement is of such character that those concrete instances which appear later in order of time exhibit some sort of development, when compared with earlier instances. In the natural sciences this is known as the differentiation of species. In the economic field, take *money*, immeasurably ancient in principle but in the course of centuries how various in detail!

Modern investigators of nature have emphasized this fact. It is of incomparably greater significance in human association and particularly in economics. In the case of the organic world the changes have occurred gradually in the course of millenia, mostly in prehistoric time. Analogous changes in the social work take place within historical time and, as it were, before our eyes. The phenomena of *property*, of *exchange*, of *money*, of *credit*, etc., are incidents of human economics, which in the course of the evolution of humanity have been in part recurring for thousands of years. They are typical phenomena. Yet how different their present from their earlier forms of manifestation! For example, money, first in the form of domestic animals, later in the form of base and afterwards precious metals, still later in the form of minted coins, and finally in the still more developed forms of money symbols. Each form is a means of exchange, but how great are the varieties of these means!

This fact of evolution of the phenomena themselves cannot remain without influence upon *theory* of the phenomena, nor upon the results of the realistic tendency in research within the realm of such phenomena. It is the aim of the realistic kind of research to investigate the types and the typical relationships of the actual phenomena. How can it remain uninfluenced by the circumstance that those types and relationships are themselves variable?

The general nature of a trade-crisis, for example, cannot be learned by observing a single phase of it. The entire passage out of normal and back to normal must be understood.

The thousand and one typical economic phenomena are variable still further not merely under the aspect of their detached form, but their form is also varied by their changing relations to the total economic phenomena of their time.

The foregoing leads to the following results: The real phenomena of human economics exhibit a development which is on the one hand a variation of individual phenomena, on the other hand a variation of phenomenal forms. This circumstance has an unquestionable influence upon the findings of the realistic

type of theoretical research in our field. This influence affects our determination both of the general character and the general correlation (categories and laws) of economic phenomena.

The above characterized fact of the development of economic phenomena is thus of too great importance to be overlooked by the realistic tendency in economic theory.

It remains for us to indicate how the historical idea may be most advantageously used in the realm of economics. Surely not by constructing as many economic theories as there are evolutionary stages of economic phenomena, or as there are various local conditions upon like evolutionary levels. The only feasible way must be one which is admissible from the standpoint of the customary scientific technique and the need of the present, which can maintain its scientific legitimacy, especially if it has already been tried with satisfactory results in departments of research which have analogous problems. It can consist only in assuming as the basis of our exhibit, a definite condition of economics which is of special significance as respects place and time, and that we call attention solely to the modifications which realistic theory must assimilate in consequence of comparison with other evolutionary stages and with other regional circumstances. A realistic theory of economics along these lines is no phantom. It is an aim which is within the reach of scientific means. It would in truth be [p. 110] *a realistic theory of economics with deference to the evolutionary viewpoint*, or if we prefer a customary but not quite appropriate expression, to the *historical* viewpoint.

We [Menger] recognize all this without reservation. We even claim to have set it forth more thoroughly than any of our predecessors. For that very reason we feel bound to insist that everything which actually confers a right to be characterized as "the historical viewpoint," or more correctly "deference to the fact of the evolution of economic phenomena" in the realistic type of economic research, is summed up in these elements, viz.: recognition of the fact of evolution of economic phenomena; comprehension of the above mentioned consequences of the same for the discharge of the specifically theoretical tasks of our science; endeavor to realize the above indicated methodological idea. On the contrary every postulate which goes beyond that, particularly the effort of the historical school of national economists to convert political economy into history, rests upon misapprehension of the most elementary bases of scientific theory, upon a confounding of theory and history, particularly of the theory of public economy with particular tendencies in the way of theoretical understanding within the realm of economics.

In respect to the problems just discussed [pp. 111-14] the historical school of German national economists has fallen into a double error. On the one hand

it has too narrowly conceived the problems. It has overlooked the fact that still other variations of social phenomena which it has not noticed may rightfully claim equal significance for the methodology of our subject with those to which it has given its exclusive attention. In the second place, its representatives have surrendered to the erroneous belief that the difficulties which the theory of economics encounters in the facts of the evolution of social phenomena and of the inter-local divergencies of the same may be completely removed by the historical method.

In the second chapter of Book II (pp. 118-29) Menger discusses certain "pseudo-historical" tendencies in economic theory which follow clues that are "mostly quite external and irrelevant for theoretical national economy."

The foregoing excerpts sufficiently indicate the scope of Menger's criticisms. Without venturing a judgment as to their conclusiveness, as *ad hominem* arguments with fellow economists, we may repeat the observation that the idea of the special competence and the exact procedure of the "historical method" was evidently at this time woefully unprecise. This, however, is the economists' affair. We are directly interested in the fact that the controversy over this matter among the economists loaded the scientific atmosphere with germs of the historical idea, and these germs, or some of them, found lodgment in the minds of some men who became sociologists. Whether the latter have a better account to render of their stewardship of this idea is a distinct question. It belongs at a later point in the survey of sociological evolution. One more passage may be epitomized as completing Menger's brief against the "historical school," and as accounting for the vigor of Schmoller's reply.

On page 200 Menger has this heading: "That the Historical School of German Economists Misunderstood the Standardizing Reform Ideas of the Historical School of Jurisprudence, and That It Only Mistakenly Regards Itself as in the Same Sense a Historical School."

The charge that may actually be made against Adam Smith, and even those of his pupils who have contributed most to the development of political economy, is not that they disregarded the matter-of-course significance of the study of

history for the politician, not that they denied that various economic institutions and governmental devices correspond with various temporal and regional economic circumstances. Their fault was rather their lack of understanding for those societary institutions which have come into being in unpremeditated ways, and for the significance of the same for public economy. On the contrary, their writings exhibit the conspicuous opinion that the institutions of popular economy are solely the intended product of the common will of society as such, results of the express agreement of the members or of positive legislation. In this one-sided pragmatic view the ideas of Adam Smith and his followers coincide with those of the writers of the French enlightenment period in general, and of the Physiocrats in particular.

The above one-sidedness and defects in conception of the problems of economic politics gave plenty of occasion for efforts after scientific reform. Nevertheless no such reform occurred, at least not in a decisive way, in the field of political economy. The scientific opponents of Smith attacked certain of his theories and conceptions, but not the above error of principle, and they could not hinder the pragmatism of his theory from gradually attaining uncontested acceptance.

A reaction of a more radical nature against the doctrines of Smith was to have its origin not from within the ranks of the economists, but it was to occur tardily enough through mechanical transference of ideas and methods of other related scientific fields to the theory of economics; a process in which misunderstandings of many sorts were destined to play an important rôle.

Menger expands this charge to the effect that the so-called Historical School of Economists was merely an unintelligent imitation of the Savigny-Niebuhr school. This charge might well have been the chief objective in Schmoller's counter-attack, but he did not choose to give it that prominence. It was entitled *Zur Methodologie der Staats- und Sozialwissenschaften*, 1883 (*Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung*, etc., VII, 975). It was a review of Menger's *Untersuchungen* and of Dilthey's *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*. In the second paragraph Schmoller expresses himself in general about Menger's book as follows:

In this book we have the serious attempt of a national economist of not a little discernment to preserve to the social sciences, or rather to theoretical national economy, its true method. It aims in particular to expose and to refute the vagaries of the historical school, in the hope of instituting a reform of the present condition of political economy in Germany.



After recapitulating the contents of Menger's Book I, Schmoller counters in this way:

The discrimination between kinds of cognition which he presupposes undoubtedly has a certain justification. Just as we contrast descriptive botany and zoölogy with plant physiology and comparative anatomy, so may statistics and history be contrasted with those procedures which aim to exhibit the general nature of economic phenomena. But this contrast may not be treated as an impassable gulf. The science of the specific, or I prefer to say descriptive science, furnishes the preliminaries for general theory. These preparatory labors are complete in the degree in which all the phenomena are described as to their essential characteristics, their causes and their effects. Complete description, however, presupposes further complete classification of the phenomena, a complete structure of categories, a correct assignment of the particular to the observed type, a complete survey of the possible causes. Every complete description is thus a contribution to the establishment of the general character of the respective science.

The more complete a science already is, the closer is the touch between complete descriptions and the theories of the general correlation of the material. The more incomplete the descriptive part of a science is, the more the theory consists in a mass of tentative, dubious and premature generalizations, the wider must be the chasm. That appears to me to be the situation of the social sciences, and to a certain extent in particular that of national economy, in spite of its comparative maturity. The way to make progress consists first and foremost in adding to the number, precision and thoroughness of observations, so that with the assistance of more comprehensive and more perfect descriptive material of every sort gathered from experience, the classification of phenomena, the elaboration of categories [*Begriffe*] may be improved, finally the typical phenomenal series and their interconnections, the causes in their entire scope may be more clearly recognized. It is by no means a neglect of theory, but the necessary sub-structure for it, temporarily to put prevailing emphasis in a science upon its descriptive phases. Only in so far as the descriptive material is bad, are charges against this procedure justified. It is in the nature of the division of scientific labor that such descriptive work should temporarily withhold forces from the task of developing theory. If meanwhile little is accomplished in the way of scientific development of theory, as Menger complains, that is less a count against those who pursue historical inquiries than against those who make investigation of theory their specialty.

Schmoller continues:

When Menger criticizes the historical labors of Roscher and Hildebrand, the fact is that it is no fault of theirs that he finds the theories of Schäffle also

untenable. Menger is of course quite right in his assertion that, as a rule, the historians of a science are not its great theorists, that the historical tendency is inclined to urge excessive caution against generalizations and theories. Those are, however, the natural faults of a vestal. Only by one-sidedness can we mortals accomplish anything. After the older abstract National Economy had accomplished great things, the marrow of its strength dried up, because it tried to compose its results excessively into abstract schemes which lacked all reality. No help was possible from this abstract tendency which had fallen victim to intellectual tuberculosis. A change of program was necessary, and the beginning must needs be made by looking at things from a quite new angle. Whatever the historical tendency did was itself also on the basis of the older theory, in so far as the latter had accomplished anything permanent. In the future there will come a new epoch for national economy. It will come, however, only through giving full value to the whole body of historico-descriptive and statistical material that is now being assembled, not through further distillation of the already hundred times distilled abstract theories of the old dogmatism. Wherever we find today healthy beginnings of new theoretical constructions, they strikingly illustrate the truth of this observation, etc.

The nature of Schmoller's further reply may be inferred from the following digest of Menger's later explanation under the title, *The Errors of the Historical School*. In our version the document is paraphrased and abbreviated, but the attempt has been made to render the meaning faithfully. The booklet is in the form of sixteen letters to a friend. Our digest reduces the argument to numbered paragraphs, disregarding the division into letters.

1. The fault which I have found with that large group known as the Historical School, which has won such an eminent place in recent German literature, is the one-sidedness with which they have expended their spiritual energy upon merely historical and statistical studies, i.e., to cultivation of specialties which, from the standpoint of political economy proper, are mere auxiliaries. In consequence, they most lamentably neglect the reform of our science which is urgently needed. They even sometimes treat theoretical research in the field of economics as contemptible, as though historical research in that field were alone legitimate [p. 13].<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps we may bring out Menger's idea by citing, as an illustration of what he would mean by a strictly economic question, the problem: What effect does war have upon prices? Then we might put over against such a question an extreme instance of the sort of topics selected by the Historical School as subject for their monography, viz., "Prices in the Leipsic Fair for the Year x."

2. Eminent representatives of the Historical School have neglected to make sharp discrimination between the theoretical and the practical divisions of economic science, and have even treated this confusion as an epoch-making advance in our science [pp. 13-14].<sup>1</sup>

3. Even those adherents of the Historical School who do not categorically deny to theoretical economics a certain legitimacy seem to me not to be completely free from a crude one-sidedness in their conception of theoretical economics. They recognize the legitimacy only of certain tendencies which are in close affinity with the historical method [p. 14].<sup>2</sup>

4. Thus the historical school seems to me to have lost vision of the system of tasks for which scientific economic research must be responsible.<sup>3</sup>

5. I regarded it as my duty to oppose these vagaries, because it seemed to me that, since the foundation of the historical school, theoretical economic investigation had been undervalued in Germany, to the great harm of our science.<sup>4</sup>

6. My work was cut out for me by the fact that the Historical School is mistaken in its views of the nature of political economy and of its parts, of the relation of these to one another, and to certain auxiliary sciences; finally in its one-sided doctrines about the nature of the endeavor for comprehension [*Erkenntnisstreben*] in the field of economics. Difficult and comprehensive as the investigation might turn out to be, there is no escaping the duty of arriving at clarity about the nature of the indicated disciplines, and their place in the circle of the sciences. This is a necessary preliminary to refutation of the errors which threaten political economy from the side of the Historical School [p. 16].<sup>5</sup>

7. It would be necessary for me to repeat myself to an extent which would exceed the limits of this monograph, if I were to deal thoroughly with the ques-

<sup>1</sup> If that was the case in a given instance, it was unfortunate, but not necessarily a count against the historical method itself.

<sup>2</sup> The truth may have been simply that the people criticized had less interest than Menger had in devoting themselves to generalizations. This in itself would not authorize Menger to read them out of the ranks of the economists.

<sup>3</sup> This was a question of fact. It might or might not have been true. The actual result was that the blind eyes of abstract theory were at last opened through the persistence of the historical method proper.

<sup>4</sup> What Dr. Martineau, of London, used to call the "rhythm of the spirit" seems to be a psychological necessity. Not all pure theorizing, not all fact gathering, but an alternation which uses both is the desideratum.

<sup>5</sup> Thus speaks the methodologist. He has his place, but it is after all an auxiliary position in the whole scheme of science. People will not take orders from him, whether laymen or colleagues. He may have some influence in shaping scientific programs, but he is more likely to function as an organizer of results reached in disorderly ways than as an engineer or architect directing the achievement of results in systematic fashion.

tions suggested in 6. My present purpose is to parry the attacks which have been made upon my *Untersuchungen*.

8. To recapitulate my previous conclusions: The historian and the statistician concern themselves with the deeds, fortunes, institutions of given states and peoples; the former under the aspect of development, the latter under the aspect of coherence [*Zuständlichkeit*]. On the other hand, the theorist in the field of civic and social phenomena has the task of visualizing not the concrete phenomena or the concrete developments, but the *forms* of which the phenomena are particular instances [*Ercheinungsformen*], and the laws of the respective human occurrences. On the other hand, it is the business of the investigator in the field of the practical civic and social sciences to teach us the principles of efficient occupation with civic and social concerns.<sup>1</sup>

9. The chief mistakes of the historical school of German economists concern their conception of the nature of theoretical national economy, their one-sided inclination toward particularistic investigation along lines closely associated with history.<sup>2</sup>

10. I had undertaken in the first place the task of setting forth in their fundamentals the entire system of problems which confront the human mind in the nature of social investigation in general, and in the field of political economy in particular. Thereupon I encountered the more special task of making out the system of justified tendencies in theoretical investigation in the field of popular economy [*Volkswirtschaft*]. With this in view I have shown that there are two chief tendencies of theoretical investigation. Each aims to make out the forms of manifestation and the laws of economic phenomena. The *first*, the empirical, is supposed to demonstrate "in their full empirical reality" the forms of manifestation and the laws of phenomena in the field of popular economics. The *second* (i.e., the tendency that seeks precision in theoretical research) has the task of tracing the phenomena back to their simplest elements, and to exhibit, on the basis of the method of isolation, the precise laws in accordance with which complicated economic phenomena develop from said elements. This is a process analogous but not identical with that of the exact natural sciences. Its aim is to enable us to comprehend social phenomena not "in their complete empirical reality," but so far as their *economic side* is concerned.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Menger's mistake was in undervaluing each of these procedures except his own. Each has its own legitimacy in time, place, degree.

<sup>2</sup> This may or may not have been a valid count against the entire historical school. Of course, "one-sided inclination toward particularistic investigation" alone is abortive; but the sequel does not show that this was the rule.

<sup>3</sup> Very well! Here was a phase of scientific work in which any one who felt it to be of paramount interest was at liberty to do his best. Menger was impatient with all the economists who did not agree with him about the paramount value of his particular



11. I have given my special attention to the efforts of the Historical School to justify this latter tendency [p. 19].

12. Schmoller concedes the above contrast between the historical and the theoretical social sciences [p. 20].

13. Schmoller seems to assert that historical studies may be to the advantage of the theorist, and conversely knowledge of economic theory for the historian. If that is what he means, he is entirely right. But does Schmoller want to make his readers think that this commonplace is something new, or that I need to be informed of it? Who wants to deny that all sciences are in a certain interdependence? Only a quite uninformed critic would draw from that fact the conclusion that *there are no fixed boundaries between the several sciences*, and that in particular the historical sciences of economic administration and theoretical national economy are interchangeable. Only against the contrary errors into which our historical national economists have fallen have I expressed myself [p. 23].<sup>1</sup>

14. There is no bridgeless chasm between history and economic theory, any more than between anatomy and physiology, between mathematics and physics or chemistry, etc. Yet in every case there are certain boundaries between sciences. The physiologist pursues aims other than those of the anatomist, the physicist employs for his purpose the findings of the mathematician. The purpose which the worker in the theory of industry proposes is quite different from that of the historian of industry, even though he makes use of historical studies to promote his purpose. History and statistics have the task of investigating the concrete deeds, fortunes, institutions of given peoples and states, while the theoretical social sciences are called to exhibit the *forms of manifestation* of social phenomena, with the laws of their succession, coexistence, etc.<sup>2</sup>

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interest. It turned out that the historical and the methodological tendencies were compatible and complementary instead of mutually inhibitive.

<sup>1</sup> Barring the unfortunate "fixed boundary" form of expression, this paragraph tends to confirm note 1, p. 575. It indicates a common piece of dry land beginning to emerge from the flood of words

<sup>2</sup> Menger was here cultivating a perception which became a germinal idea that bore fruit among the earlier American sociologists. He was struggling, however, with the "fixed boundary" illusion. The full truth which later emerged was that "fixed boundaries" between objects of knowledge do not exist between the objects themselves. They are conceptual constructions of our own minds. They correspond only with certain mirage aspects of things, so to speak, which present themselves to our minds when we are viewing objects from afar. The nearer we get to them, the more evident it becomes that these conceptually detached objects are functions of one another, and the ultimate task of objective science is to solve the problems of these functional relations. In attempting to solve these problems we demonstrate the poverty of the static classifications of sciences.



15. Here, with reference to the tasks and the aims of investigation, the sharp boundaries are located between the sciences in question. These boundaries may never be removed without opening the door to the stupidest dilletantism. My complaints against the historical school of German national economists is not that it pursues the history of public thrift *as an auxiliary of political economy*, but that in zeal for historical studies, a part of its adherents have completely lost sight of political economy [p. 25].<sup>1</sup>

16. You ask me why Schmoller does not freely admit the matter-of-course proposition that the historical sciences of public thrift (the history and statistics of the latter) are in the relation of auxiliaries to political economy; why he rather does his utmost to confuse the boundaries between them. The explanation, or to use Schmoller's own dignified expression, the explanation of his "aversion to the blinders of scientific division of labor," is obvious. No reasonable person denies the importance of historical studies of research in the field of political economy. No one denies the usefulness of the history of public economy as an aid in understanding economic phenomena. But this does not satisfy the editor of the Berlin *Jahrbuch*. He wants to carry on his historico-statistical miniature painting [*Kleinmalerei*] without giving up his claim to be a worker in political economy, and specifically in economic theory. Hence his aversion to the "blinders of scientific division of labor." He is in reality opposed to every appropriate determination of the boundaries between history and theory of economics. Hence the opinion which he obstinately holds that the history of economics is the *descriptive* division of political economy. The fact is that his history is not a division of political economy at all, but an auxiliary to economics. In order to get over this at best hardly bridgeable chasm he proposes the theory that the chasm between history and theory in the field of economics is not unbridgeable. Therewith he regards the question between the historical and the theoretical sciences as settled [p. 27].<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is a curious combination of countermarch, on the one hand, toward reiteration of the hermetically-sealed-compartment-conception of science, and on the other hand, a charge as to a matter of fact against certain adherents of the historical school of economists. The question of permanent interest is not the specific matter alleged, but whether the investigations prompted by the historical school made for presenting problems of economic relationships in more objective terms. Subsequent experience has answered that question with emphatic affirmatives.

<sup>2</sup> Menger's insistence that history of economic facts is not political economy at all, but an auxiliary to economics is persistence in the conception that sciences are differentiated by subject-matter. Schmoller on the other hand cannot be credited with the later conception that science, on its operative side, is a co-operation of procedures or techniques, sometimes to be sure on various subject-matter, but also sometimes on various phases of the same subject-matter. We need not search into the merits of Schmoller as a promoter of this latter perception. It is enough to point out that

17. I must quote Balzac: "Bienheureux les Ecrivains qui se contentent si facilement!" In order that Schmoller may peacefully continue his historico-statistical *micrography*, historically developed, generally recognized scientific classifications must be overthrown. In order that in the future he may devote himself undisturbed to his Strassburg historical promenades, and still count as a worker in political economy, all the scientific categories must be stood on their heads! I must repeat myself again. Whoever uses the findings of historical investigation for purposes of research in the field of political economy is of course a political economist. Whoever, on the contrary, himself investigates the history of public thrift, is a scientific historian, assuming of course that he is sufficiently expert with the sources and technique of historical research. These are the facts and it is to be hoped that they will remain the facts, even if it should turn out that Schmoller fundamentally misinterprets the task of political economy [p. 28].<sup>1</sup>

18. If Schmoller had admitted the fundamental difference between the historical sciences of public thrift, and political economy, which I have pointed out, there would still remain a difference between my views and his of the relation of history to political economy. There can be no reasonable doubt that the history and statistics of public thrift have the relation of auxiliaries to political economy in general, and to the theoretical part of economics in particular. On the other hand, there is quite as little room for doubt that these auxiliaries are of importance as tributaries to the principal science.

19. Nevertheless, the question of the *relative quantity of justification* of the particular types of investigation is quite another matter. No reasonable man will doubt that on this question there is possibility both of undervaluation and of exaggeration.

20. I know very well that, among all the tasks which scientific discussion imposes, none is more difficult than determination of the proper boundaries of

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Menger was the champion of a losing cause, in so far as he attempted to perpetuate a dictatorship of categories over scientific rank, instead of consenting to establishment of scientific status on the basis of partnership in scientific functions.

<sup>1</sup> The truth involved here is simply that when one is unearthing specific economic facts, of one's own time or of any earlier period, one is not in that process doing the work of generalizing economic relations. The state of knowledge at a given time must determine which of the two procedures is the more timely, and in that sense the more important, in advancing objective knowledge. Whether Menger's criterion shall decide that a given worker at a given moment shall be called an economist or a historian is very much like the question whether the particular tool in a particular workman's hand at a particular time shall decide whether a workman is a stonemason or a carpenter.

scientific activity. In its idea all science is endless. Even the most one-sided exaggeration of a scientific tendency has its utility, and consequently, from a certain standpoint, its justification. It is therefore not to be denied that even the most one-sided devotion of representatives of our science to historical studies may have its indirect use.

On the other hand, it is no less true that the number of workers in a given science, in every people and period is limited, and there is no unlimited capacity corresponding with the unlimited reach of scientific tasks. Every one-sided exaggeration of particular kinds of research, even though they be legitimate in themselves, amounts, therefore, to a corresponding neglect of other research. This applies to the present historical tendency. This is especially regrettable since theoretical political economy today needs to concentrate all its resources upon reform of itself.

21. The case is the more urgent since, as we have shown, history of public thrift is not a part of political economy, but only an auxiliary—a useful, an indispensable auxiliary, but still an auxiliary. The almost exclusive devotion of academic German economists to this auxiliary is therefore such an obvious one-sidedness that a difference of judgment about it is incomprehensible.

22. In spite of Schmoller's attempts to becloud the issue, this is my contention: *We must restore to its just rights every legitimate type of investigation in the field of public thrift.* I am not the one who is wearing "the blinders of scientific division of labor."

23. Says Sax (*Das Wesen und die Aufgaben der Nat. Oek.*, Wien, 1884, p. 32): "Whoever in an unprejudiced way, especially without a retainer as representative of a one-sided tendency, gives a hearing to Menger's argument, will receive the impression that it gives full value to the reciprocal interworkings of all the types of investigation as expressions of the endowment of our mind."

Whoever, on the other hand, with like detachment, follows Schmoller's literary activities, will surely fail to gather from the half dozen monographs which he has thus far published on the development of industrial conditions in Strassburg, an impression of universality [p. 33].<sup>1</sup>

24. How has it come about that such a ruinous transfer of energy from political economy proper to historical studies has occurred? Not to confine the answer to Schmoller and his sympathizers, such a general phenomenon can

<sup>1</sup> The soul of truth in propositions 18-23 is not confirmation or refutation of Menger's claim that this, that, or the other is or is not political economy. The really important matter struggling for expression is that all the aspects of knowledge insisted upon by both Menger and Schmoller are necessary, each in its time, and place and way, for the utmost understanding of economic relations. Everything in the discussion which did not make for this synthesis was relatively temporary and trivial.

have been the outcome only of much more universal causes. The one-sided overvaluation of historical studies on the part of a portion of our German economists has its roots then, in fact, in a series of errors about the nature of political economy and about the relation of historical studies to the latter; in a series of false fundamental assumptions, which, superficially held, lend plausibility to the one-sided historicism now prevailing among us.<sup>1</sup>

25. First of all I must notice the prevalent opinion that the way to a reform of political economy, at least the first step in the needed direction, is investigation of the history of thrift.

Says Schmoller: "It is by no means a neglect of theory, but a necessary substructure for it, when for a time we proceed in a predominantly descriptive manner in a science—that by such activity a portion of the working force is temporarily deflected from theory, is incidental to the nature of scientific division of labor."

26. As to the importance of history and statistics in furnishing a substructure for political economy I have expressed myself, I hope, with sufficient force. The consequences deduced by Schmoller do not follow. The proper inference is that theoretical national economy should assemble the results of historical and statistical research, and use them for its purposes.

This is precisely what our historical economists are not doing. On the contrary they are contenting themselves with *historisch-statistische Kleinmalerei*. While they are persisting in their *historische Mikrographie*, in which they are within their rights, they want at the same time to count as the economists par excellence! This is the danger to be averted.<sup>2</sup>

27. In order to give good and regular standing to that untenable position, history and statistics must receive the stamp of "parts" of political economy.

<sup>1</sup> The more fundamental explanation was hinted at in note 3 above on proposition 5, p. 588. In particular, the historical reaction against classical political economy was primarily sheer disgust with its sterility. A sense of the futile subjectivity of such pseudo-science goaded large numbers of open-minded scholars to search for evidence that would yield real knowledge. Undoubtedly much of the response to this stimulus was equally sterile extravagance in the other direction. The essence of the historical movement, however, was its insistence that understanding of economic relations must be found in discovery of facts and their connections, rather than in manipulation of concepts.

<sup>2</sup> There is an appeal to our sense of humor in Menger's demand that all the use of historical research in political economy shall be made by those theoretical economists who are jealous of historical research. The charge of malfeasance against the historical school may or may not have been well founded. It does not touch the principle involved, viz., human experience should be consulted for its testimony as to human tendencies.



In truth, they are no "parts" at all, but only *auxiliaries*. To the same end, the historians insist that, at least for the present, the only work to be done, or the chief part of the work, must be on these "descriptive parts." Says Schmoller: "The future will bring a new epoch for national economy, but only through employment of the whole body of historico-descriptive and statistical material which is now in process of collection," meanwhile "it is no neglect of theory, but a necessary substructure for it, to proceed in our science in a predominantly descriptive way."

28. Wagner, Dietzel, Sax, and others unite in protest against this acquiescence in a period of decline for economic theory, while countless historical researches are bringing in the material for theory. They are at fault only in that they are still too optimistic. Not a generation or two, but countless aeons, would be needed to assemble the necessary materials for the historico-statistical substructure to which Schmoller refers.

29. There remains the special claim of a portion of the historical school, *that history is the exclusively empirical basis not only for theoretical economics, but for the practical sciences of popular thrift*. It is important to expose the error of this view, because it is decisive for the entire attitude of the historical economists toward the question of *method* in our science [p. 42].

30. The supporters of the above view [referring now to history and theoretical economics] seem to me first of all to overlook that, along with history, everyday life is a necessary basis for economic theory; i.e., knowledge of the motives, aims, circumstances affecting results, etc. The most complicated economic phenomena are predominantly the outcome of contact between the economic endeavors of individuals. Understanding of these latter, and of their reciprocal relationships, is consequently elemental. The history of economics does not furnish this factor of intelligence, especially not the psychological motivation of economic details.

31. Still less can history count as the exclusive empirical foundation for *practical* economics [p. 44]. In devoting themselves almost exclusively to historical studies, our historical economists are one-sided in two ways: first, instead of devoting themselves to their central business of investigating the laws of economics and the fundamental principles for successful action in the realm of practical economics, they substitute an auxiliary procedure. But worse than that, second, they concern themselves with *only one* of the numerous sciences auxiliary to political economy; and still farther, with one which can furnish us only a part of the empirical material necessary for support of the general truths. All the time they claim to be developing political economy itself. They are like the teamsters who wanted to be classed as architects because they had delivered some of the stone and sand for the building [p. 46].



32. Do not believe, my friend, that the pretention of history to be the exclusively empirical basis for political economy is the last trump which historicism has played. A part of our historical economists have thrown up the idea altogether of theoretical and practical sciences of economics, in order to justify historical exhibits as the only legitimate political economy. Meanwhile even those who retain the idea of theoretical and practical economic sciences with more or less consistency have advanced the claims of historicism one step beyond the standpoint previously indicated. They set up the demand that "*history shall speak for itself*." In place of laws of economic phenomena, and of fundamental principles for guidance of economic programs, including purposeful conduct of the economic functions of the state, they would set up historico-statistical material, arranged in accordance with certain categories. When Schmoller demands that "national economy shall be an essentially descriptive procedure, and that it should present to the student a concrete individual picture, arranged according to ideas, types, relations, etc., specialized to the extent of following out into particulars of the phenomena and causes," he documents himself as representative of a view which would substitute orderly arranged historico-statistical material for the theoretical and practical sciences of economics—without doubt approximately the lowest possible standpoint upon which a social science can be placed.

What has been the course of development in the Historical School of German economists. First, theory! Then theory decorated with historico-statistical notes, and interspersed with historical excursions! Then more notes with historical excursions with demand to be ranked as theory! Further "progress" in this direction is scarcely thinkable [p. 50].<sup>1</sup>

33. Schmoller cannot agree even with my account of the relation between theoretical national economy and the practical economic sciences [p. 50].<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It might have occurred to both disputants that decision of the issue would be doubtful until experience had demonstrated how much or how little history could be made to yield in support of economic theory or practice. It would be profitless for us to join in debate on the earlier issue. It would lead beyond the range of our present inquiry to find the answer to the later question.

<sup>2</sup> It would take us too far into minutiae of tentative economic classification to follow this part of the argument (Letters X, XI, XII). The remaining letters (XIII–XVI) degenerate into a type of personalities in which the dilution of scientific substance is scarcely distinguishable. It should be said that the fault was not wholly on one side. As we shall see presently, in dealing with an episode a decade earlier than the present book, Schmoller was provocative of this sort of tactics. We add a single passage as sufficient indication of the personal animus in the discussion (Letter XIV, pp. 71 ff.).

34. You say that I seem to take satisfaction in my opponent's defective orientation in the problems of method which he treats, and in the confusion of his ideas. You urge that those ideas in connection with the prestige of this man constitute a challenge to the most serious reflection on the present condition of German national economy.

I am aware, my friend, that it is a grievous sin to ridicule the ridiculous. Moreover, it is so hard not to fall into the tone of contempt toward an insolent opponent. But what other tone is appropriate toward the utterances of a man who, without the slightest substantial orientation in the questions of scientific methodology, carries himself like an authoritative judge of the value or non-value of the results of methodological investigation? Is there in the realm of science a phenomenon less stimulating to serious reflection than inflated amateurishness sitting in judgment over the results of careful scientific research?

Discuss in serious fashion the most difficult questions of epistemology with a man in whose mind every effort for reform of theoretical national economy, indeed every cultivation of the same, is pictured as Manchesterism! Discuss, without dropping into a bantering tone, such questions with a scholar whose entire stock of somewhat original knowledge in the field of theoretical national economy consists of a primordial ooze of historico-statistical material; with a scholar who incessantly confounds with one another the most simple concepts of the theory of knowledge! And such a quarrel as that should afford me satisfaction? If Schmoller's contentions against my methodological researches were not important for reasons to which I have referred in my first letter, how gladly would I forego discussion with him. I should prefer to confine myself to correction of the most obvious misrepresentations of my views of his *Jahrbuch*, as in the case of a colleague of similar opinions to his in another journal.

Furthermore, do not believe that a discussion with an opponent like Schmoller is less exacting than it would be with a scholar completely oriented in the questions at issue. How easy is it to teach such a man, or to induce him to teach himself something better? How easy, by comparison, it is to discover in the consistent thought processes of an expert certain inaccuracies, yes, certain inconsistencies and mistakes, and by uncovering and correcting them to contribute to the promotion of science! How gratifying is it, moreover, to render due thanks to an author for the correction of our own views, and for the instruction which we have derived from his writings! The most difficult and uninspiring experience in the field of science is always critical contact with one-sided representatives of practical partisanship; with men who carry over their one-sidedness and the bad habits of party conflict into scientific discussion. How much more unedifying when such opponents pose as of superior scientific rank!

As in a special library collected by an authority, and regardless of the richness of the collection, the eye of a specialist would easily detect certain gaps; while in an arbitrarily thrown together mass of books an expert might look in vain for a resting point, and might presently turn away, because such a miscellany simply does not provoke serious consideration—so when an estimate of the knowledge of a writer is in question. The strength of the methodological standpoint of Schmoller consists in the fact that it is out of reach [*unfassbar*], below the range of serious criticism. And will you blame me for not allowing myself to be misled either by the historico-philosophical studies of which he is constantly talking, or by his lectures on the methodology of the civic sciences, for which he is “arming” himself, and for not taking the methodologist Schmoller more seriously than he deserves?

What would you say, for example, if I should desire to examine more closely here the ideas of Schmoller about the peculiar methodological problems of our science? For instance, his ideas about the inductive and the deductive method? Or the results of his profound researches into the nature and the credentials of these forms of knowledge in general, and as applied to political economy in particular?

From your horror I gather how far you are from taking the methodologist Schmoller seriously. If anyone gropes in such complete darkness with reference to the aims of research in the field of national economy, as does the editor of the Berlin *Jahrbuch*, his ideas about the processes of knowledge in the field of our science will be insured against early attack.<sup>1</sup>

As was the case with the Thibaut-Savigny controversy, this discussion and others like it, upon the same or related subjects, had consequences quite apart from the merits of the debate itself. We shall recur to some of them. At present it is enough to repeat that a radical weakness in the position of each disputant, Menger's more obviously than Schmoller's, was the preconception, referred to above (p. 590), that reality is made up of detached masses of stuff, and that sciences are coterminous each with one of these geometrically delimited bodies of material. Today not even astronomy or geology pictures its peculiar objects of knowledge in such

<sup>1</sup> For serious students of the movement toward objectivity the question is pertinent: Assuming the need of a valid method in economics, and throughout social science, how should we estimate the merits of the two arguments as developed up to this point?

ways. How much less the sciences of human affairs! It turns out that, so far as our means of knowledge go, human reality is not chiefly structures but processes. These processes do not maneuver in close accordance with the forms of any antecedent "science," nor do they respect any limits prescribed by any antecedent definitions of scientific competence. Our mental peculiarities being such as they are, it was inevitable that our growth in understanding should have to pass through stages like that of which the Menger-Schmoller type of debate was typical. In principle, however, Menger's insistence that the things which Schmoller wanted to bring to light might be knowledge, but they were not political economy, was nearly related to the attitude of the starving economist who refused to eat, unless the origin of the food offered could be conclusively referred to one of the economic categories, "extraction," "transformation," "transportation." Since Menger's time scientific methodology recognizes that the existence of the food and the nutritive values that it contains are first; scientific categories for mental manipulation of them are second. In other words, neither Menger nor Schmoller had hit upon a tenable principle of scientific correlation.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE RESTORATION OF ETHICS IN ECONOMIC THEORY. THE PROFESSORIAL SOCIALISTS. THE *VEREIN FÜR SOCIALPOLITIK*

If we had inquired farther into the method of Knies, in connection with the historical school of economics, we should have found that it not only varied from Anglo-German classicism on the historical side but that it advanced beyond the frontier above indicated in the direction of the ethical standpoint later occupied by the ethical school.<sup>1</sup> Without attempting to apportion justice to Knies for his share in promoting this impulse, we may indicate a stage in its development by citing an episode in the life of Adolf Wagner.

As we have seen, as early as 1853 Knies had shot into the previous theories of political economy as the science of "wealth" the disturbing thesis that political economy can never be an approximately conclusive theory unless it enlarges its scope, and makes itself a theory of *persons in their varied activities*. Essentially, if not in so many words, this theorem was an assertion that political economy cannot be conclusive until it consciously and deliberately organizes itself as a moral science. Although it will carry us nearly two decades beyond a point to which we must presently return to take up both the political science factor in the evolutionary process which we are indicating and the appearance of the sociological factor proper, it is in order to follow the development of the moral conception to a somewhat later phase of its expression among German economists.

Without contradicting or withdrawing anything that has been said above about the pioneering of Knies, and without changing our

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 193-200.



purpose not to attempt to assign ratios of merit to different agents in the evolution, there are good reasons for referring to Adolf Wagner as occupying in the present vista of tradition the place of a John the Baptist in the modern ethical movement in German economic theory. It is not a violent forcing of analogy to extend the figure of speech by treating Knies as the Isaiah of the same movement.

On October 12, 1871, Wagner addressed the assembly of the Evangelical Church of Prussia. Wagner was *Professor der Staatswissenschaften* in the University of Berlin. The more inclusive title seemed to have little effect in shaping his academic program so that he would not be known to the world as an economist pure and simple. When we consider that it would be difficult to assemble, anywhere in the world, an equal number of equally representative clerical and lay persons who would incarnate a greater volume of religious, economic, and political traditionalism than the audience to which Wagner spoke, we have a suggestion of the setting of the incident which made it not merely notable in the history of academic thought about social science, but provocative and even revolutionary as a demand for concrete action. The incident may be recalled best by abstracting parts of Wagner's argument. It reflects directly the attitude of the innovating German economists, and indirectly that of the traditionalists who clung to the idols of "Manchesterism."

The main points of the address are these:

WHEREAS: *First*, The science of national economy is in the midst of a great crisis and,

WHEREAS: *Second*, The facts brought out by socialistic criticism contradict the "harmony of interests" dogma of English economists and,

WHEREAS: *Third*, The classical political economy regards economic self-interest as a natural force in the economic world just as gravity is in the physical world. This being the case, it holds that there is no room for argument whether the operation of the force is good or bad. Its workings must be accepted as pure matters of natural necessity, and

WHEREAS: *Fourth*, This theory shut out ethical factors from influence upon economic action.

*Therefore, Fifth: Ethical principles must again come into force. In economic transactions between persons the relation of man to man must come to its own:*

A. In the relation between employer and employee;

B. In the relation of the more to the less prosperous classes, especially in the matter of the self-limitation of luxury;

C. In limiting monopolistic use of landed property. (Certain of the single-tax premises.)

D. In the relation of the state to social questions. The proper policy of the state is neither passivity nor indiscriminate intervention, but constant watchfulness and throwing of its weight from case to case against injustice.<sup>1</sup>

Wagner begins the second division of the address by denying that he is a spokesman of the labor party, or of the socialists; but he continues his positive argument with this assertion: "I do not hesitate to characterize an unprejudiced testing of the socialistic criticism, and the recognition of the just kernel contained in the socialistic demands, as the inevitable task and obligation of the higher classes, and of the state itself."

If the head of the department of economics at Princeton should pronounce the same judgment today, in terms of bolshevists and bolshevism, in a session of the Presbyterian General Assembly, it would be less sensational than Wagner's utterance in its time and place.

The deep significance of the address may be put into American colloquialism in this way: It put squarely up to the well-to-do classes in society, and to the governing powers in the state, the duty of accepting a program of moral responsibility for amelioration of human conditions. It definitely proclaimed an ethical crusade as the duty of all good citizens, whether officials or not, in place of passivity in tolerance of unrestricted play of greed in those citizens with whom greed is the strongest motive. The speech turns out to have been a waymark in German history. Within three years the policy which it advocated had been adopted in principle by the most influential body of theorists in Europe, and the Hohenzollern empire became sponsor for a version of it in practice.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. C. Adams, *The Relation of the State to Industrial Action*.

The following is a translation of the closing paragraph:

I am clearly aware that I have not presented to you a solution of the social question. A solution, in the strict sense, is impossible. Always, poverty and misery, harm and suffering, welfare and riches, will exist side by side in this world. There will always be differences in property which cannot be traced back to actual merit or personal fault. It is our business, however, so far as possible, to diminish the evils that grow out of this fact and to keep the existing inequalities from increasing. We have the means of doing this in progressive measure. If we use these means, we have then performed our duties, and this may be demanded of us; not more, but also not less.

A sermon in Mandel Hall, by a Scotch preacher, in 1912, sounded to the present writer like a conscious dilution of Wagner's address. An official of the University of Chicago, who had long been known for his interest in social work, expressed the appreciation that it was virtually a new inspiration! He had never heard such an argument before. He did not know that it had been one of the stock properties of social science for a generation.

As we have intimated, the Wagner incident was merely a ripple on the surface of a thought current which was remaking German social science. An ethic of a certain type, not necessarily under that rubric, had captured the convictions of the younger academic social scientists in Germany simultaneously with the founding of the Hohenzollern empire.

Whatever convinced the men in the social science chairs in Germany was relatively a stronger factor in shaping the conduct of the state than academic opinion in any other country of the world.

The German social scientists, particularly the younger economists, organized in 1873 to give expression to their views on the most vital questions of social policy. The conception of the state as an organic social unity was the point of departure in their formulations. In their conception it was the duty of the state, whether acting as government or as a voluntary society forming a common public opinion, to act always with a view to realizing the unity of all the members of the state. The discharge of this duty should be undertaken in such a way that the humanity of each member

will be affirmed in policies tending to give to each individual increasing security and insurance of conditions in which the latent interests of the individual's share in general human destiny will have increasing opportunity to realize themselves.

This ideal was known as "social policy" (*Sozialpolitik*), and the organization which (after 1873) made the promotion of social policy its distinctive aim adopted the title *Verein für Sozialpolitik*.

As was indicated above, the birth of the later German Empire was also the new birth of German thought about society. As we have repeatedly said, for almost a century German social theories had either fallen on sleep or they had followed (at least the economic theories had followed) the strange gods of social conceptions that were alien to the real German spirit. If there is one thing more certain than all things else about German civilization, it is that the Germans always believe in the right and duty of society, and particularly of society in the form of the state, to preside over the destiny of individuals. We need not open the question: How much or how little final truth is contained in this German presumption? The historical fact is that this presumption is inbred in the German mind; but for half a century (roughly between 1820 and 1870) the natural course of German thought and action had been confused by dallying with the contradictory presumption imported from England. In 1873 the Germans came back to themselves, and in the matter of domestic social theory and policy have remained consistent with themselves ever since, i.e., in their conceptions of the relative primacy of individual and state. The Germans were, are, and are likely long to remain collectivists. They do not believe that the best results for all concerned are to be gained under a régime in which each individual is the sole judge of what is good for himself and his neighbors.<sup>1</sup> To the typical German, even of the academic caste, these seem to be the only two alternatives. The Germans believe that the best results are obtained for all the members of a nation, when there is machinery for ascer-

<sup>1</sup> Their conception of the American form of society has always been expressed in variations upon this theme.

taining and enforcing the collective will of the nation against each and every individual who may have an insubordinate will. Germany is Exhibit A in that division of the world's museum of experience which is reserved for experiments in collective initiative for the general welfare. This analysis is not dictated by a desire to be a part of such an experiment, at least not in the German sense. It is well, however, for Americans to understand the experiment and to watch its workings with the Germans to whom it is matter-of-course. Not merely in the latest generation, but for more than three centuries the Germans have been doing systematically and progressively, by means of governmental control, nearly every thing that English economic and political theories have meanwhile declared states neither may do nor can do. Whatever the rest of the world may think of German civilization in other respects, there is no room for doubt that it is a civilization which accomplishes a very high percentage of whatever it sets out to do. It is not an impotent civilization. We may not admire its aims, but we cannot deny that it reaches its aims with a degree of certainty which gives all the other nations constant food for reflection.

The Great War has done nothing to invalidate this estimate. Details are already changed, and they will continue to change, whether the German form of republicanism continues or monarchy returns. The Germans will persist indefinitely in doing whatever they do on the basis of the collectivistic presumption, in contrast with our American collective enterprises on the basis of the individualistic presumption. That perversion of the presumption to which the militarists were able to commit the Germans has not permanently discredited the presumption in the German mind. All the reconstruction which they have accomplished since 1918 has been a function of that presumption. All the recovery that the Germans will be able to make will be by means of application of that presumption. That is, with the notable exception of the militaristic fiasco, collectivism has worked efficiently for the Germans. This judgment has to do with visible material results. The American case against the German type of collectivism, as



a political system, is strongest in its contention that the Germans buy their tangible results at an excessive cost of the imponderables in the character of citizens, especially in sacrifice of individual self-reliance and initiative. The decision between these contradictions remains for the future. Our appraisal of the successes which the Germans have gained by their application of collectivism by no means makes for the conclusion: Therefore a stampede to imitate Germany! The moral is rather: There may be more in the collectivistic idea than we individualistic Americans have imagined. It is worth while for us to get all the instruction we can from German experience in working a system based on the opposite presumption from ours. As we have said in slightly different form, American civilization starts with the presumption that *individual liberty* is the fundamental and paramount factor in a rational human condition. German civilization starts with the presumption that the *welfare of the state* must always have precedence over the liberty of individuals. German experience up to the Great War, and for merely varied reasons since, is important for Americans, because it is a record of dealing, with some measure of success, with classes of problems which Americans are now facing. In Germany these problems were in part the product of an individualism in practice which the Germans had never quite accepted in theory. In America these problems are largely the product of an individualism in practice which we have stoutly and even blatantly professed and attempted to justify in theory. The modern domestic problems of the Germans have been to a large extent manifestations of conditions which they have never indorsed in principle. American domestic problems at this moment are the natural outgrowth of principles which we have published as the final terms of human wisdom.

Among the results of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 was precipitation of all the problems which we are now falling into the habit of indicating by the general term *proletarianism*. The formation of the *Verein für Socialpolitik* was the organization of the

purpose, primarily of German academic economists, to find out what justice dictated in dealing with those problems.<sup>1</sup>

As early as 1848 Hildebrand had declared: "These two theories [the traditional and the socialistic] have the merit of having thrown a clear light upon the one-sidedness of Adam Smith's theory, and upon the necessity of a thorough reconstruction of economic theory."<sup>2</sup> While men of such foresight were not wanting during the period of the classical obsession, they were apparently a forlorn hope until the early seventies. At that time the innovators differed greatly among themselves in matters of detail. Schmoller may be taken as most completely embodying the common attitude of the objective historical school at that stage. The guiding motive and the standard of judgment in all his writings at that turning-point is indicated by his phrase, "the ethical aim in civilization" (*der ethische Kulturzweck*).<sup>3</sup>

After much preliminary correspondence among the men who felt the new impulse, Wagner, of Berlin, and Eckardt, of Hamburg, being credited by Miss Conrad with leading activity, a conference was held at Halle, July 13, 1872, for discussion of the proposed "Congress for Social Reform."<sup>4</sup>

After protracted exchange of views as to what those present could do with reference to the existing social and industrial maladjustments, particularly as to the practicability of rousing civic sentiment and sharpening the social conscience, it was resolved to hold in the future regular conferences for discussion of these social questions. It was decided that the first of these congresses should be held in October of the same year (1872). A select list

<sup>1</sup> For the particular history of the *Verein*, the most available introduction is the monograph by Miss Else Conrad, daughter of Professor Conrad, of Halle: *Der Verein für Sozialpolitik und seine Wirksamkeit auf dem Gebiet der gewerblichen Arbeiterfrage*, Jena, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> *Nationalökonomie der Gegenwart und Zukunft* (1848), p. 328.

<sup>3</sup> See *Preuss. Jahrb.* (1874), p. 323.

<sup>4</sup> See Conrad, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

of names was made for private invitation to the congress. It included a dozen or more newspapers. It was further decided that the subjects for discussion should be three specific political propositions, to be put into the form of bills for presentation to the Reichstag. On the following day (July 14), eight of the men who had taken part in the previous discussion continued the conference, with the result that an executive committee of five was put in charge of further arrangements. The invitations to the October congress stated that the meeting had been called because the promoters believed "that the future of the German empire and of German civilization in general would depend very largely upon the shaping of our social conditions in the immediate future," and furthermore, that this "adjustment of our social conditions will depend vitally upon the attitude of the intellectual and propertied classes, of public, and press and government, with reference to the social question."

On Sunday, October 6, 1872, the congress met at Eisenach, and Schmoller made the opening address. It was a rehearsal of the reasons which had led to the calling of the congress, and an appeal for energy in pushing its purposes. The minutes of this congress were published with the title, *Verhandlungen der Eisenacher Versammlung zur Besprechung der sozialen Frage* (Leipzig, 1877).

As Schmoller pictured the situation, there was a deep chasm between the different social classes, between rich and poor. There was seething unrest among the laborers. It threatened to become revolution. It had already led to skepticism about the truth of the Manchester type of economic theory represented by the older *Volkswirtschaftlicher Kongress*. In abstract economic science a new tendency had already made itself felt, but on practical questions there was substantial agreement between the older and the newer schools about such subjects as reform of the tariff and freedom of occupation. But since those matters had been practically settled, the contrast between the two views must necessarily grow more significant, because, on the one hand, the social question was

every day becoming more pressing, and on the other hand the achieved unity of the German state had created a civic power capable of grappling triumphantly with many needed reforms.

Schmoller went on to say that while some of those who composed the *Volkswirtschaftlicher Kongress* realized the change of conditions, and were aware of the consequent problems, the leaders of that body held all the more obstinately to the extreme form of the old theories, and did all in their power to hinder self-help among the laborers, as, for example, the formation of trade unions, etc. Since this is the case, argued Schmoller, it is idle to hope for judicial hearing of contradictory opinions by such a body. Our only alternative is independent procedure; and this Eisenach congress was accordingly called. Since the object was to assemble all the different tendencies that oppose extreme individualism, the composition of the congress was heterogeneous, including moderate socialists as well as members of the Centre.

In certain points, however, declared Schmoller, the majority of those who had planned the congress, and of those who had signed the call, were agreed. Thus they held a view of the state which was as far from the glorification of the individual, in accordance with the "natural harmony" theory, as it was from the absolutistic theory of a state in which all power is monopolized by the government. In the present congress, continued Schmoller, the prevalent view is rather the historical view that *the state is a part of the stream of becoming*. For that reason, its functions will vary from narrow to broad, according to the circumstances of civilization. The state must always rank, however, as the most tremendous institution for the education of the human race. It is desirable, therefore, that the state shall be strong enough to predominate over the different interests within its sphere. It must exercise just protection over the weak, and should elevate the lower classes.

Other propositions in Schmoller's address have since become familiar to all who have studied his writings of this period, and to many more who have not traced them to their source. For example,

"We do not propose a program of levelling downward, in the socialistic sense, but there should be social gradations up which every man is at liberty to climb. We should not preserve the present social ladder, from which the middle rungs have been knocked out." Again: "The ideal which should guide the individual, the state, and society is *the inclusion of a progressively enlarging ratio of the people in participation in all the higher goods of civilization*. To realize this ideal, which is democratic in the best sense of the term, must be our present endeavor, as it seems to be the goal of human liberty in general." The attitude represented by this last quotation was presently the center of Treitschke's attack.

One hundred and sixty names were registered as members of the congress, and fifty speakers took part in the discussions. The subjects considered were factory legislation, interruption of employment, and the housing question. It was decided that no votes should be taken. A committee was appointed to make preparations for the next congress, in which it was proposed to effect a permanent organization for social reform.

The influence of the Eisenach assembly exceeded the expectations of its promoters. The press took up the matter very earnestly, and approval of the general purpose of the movers was expressed by many people of very different shades of opinion.<sup>1</sup>

On May 31, 1873, the committee above referred to issued a call for the formation of a union (*Verein*) for the purposes foreshadowed in the Eisenach congress. This call was substantially as follows:<sup>2</sup>

The Eisenach Congress of October 7, 1872, for discussion of the social question, instructed the undersigned Committee to call a meeting during the present year in pursuance of the purposes of the Congress.

<sup>1</sup> Up to this point our sketch has followed quite closely the monograph by Miss Conrad. Her account has peculiar value because it is virtually the testimony of her father, Professor Conrad, of Halle, who was in close touch with the whole movement.

<sup>2</sup> *Schriften*, I, 201-2.



For our conception of the social situation we refer to the printed proceedings of last year's assembly.<sup>1</sup>

Among the many more or less valid attempts to modify present industrial society, the strife between capital and labor is threateningly prominent. We are of the opinion that this conflict presents to state and society pressing duties of peaceful reform.

In the first place, it will be necessary to discover the facts about the conditions of laborers, and about their relations to employers, to determine the demands for occupational organizations, to encourage their proper development, and to promote understandings between the conflicting parties.

In the same way the other social and economic problems of the time should be taken into consideration—thus public health, public education, transportation, stock companies and taxation.

We are of the opinion that the unrestricted activity of partly hostile and unequally strong special interests is not in accordance with the welfare of the community. On the contrary, the demands of the community and of humanity must assert themselves even in economic life, and well considered intervention of the state for protection of the threatened interests of all concerned should be promptly demanded.

We do not regard this civic guardianship as a desperate expedient, as a necessary evil, but rather as the fulfilling of one of the highest tasks of our time and of our nation. In serious discharge of this task, the egoism of the individual and the immediate interests of the classes will fall into proper subordination to the permanent and higher destiny of the whole.

We believe that a regular exchange of views between employers and laborers, men of theory and men of practice, will contribute essentially to an accommodation. We therefore invite all members of the Eisenach Congress, and all of like views, especially administrative officials, to meet in Eisenach on the 12th of October next, and to join the Union which will then be formed.

The *Verein für Socialpolitik* which resulted from this call became the most influential association of academic men that has ever been organized. It was essentially a concerted declaration that life is a problem to be worked out like an architectural or an engineering task—that the whole society must consider the conditions and resources with which it may and must count in constructive living, that a society which is relatively mature and

<sup>1</sup> *Verhandlungen der Eisenacher Versammlung zur Besprechung der sozialen Frage, am 6 und 7 Oct. 1872.* Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot.

reasonably self-conscious will regard life as something to be planned for in advance, as much as the business of any lesser corporation, that intensive study of all the conditions and relationships which make up a national situation conscientiously regarded as at every moment a crisis must henceforth be counted as the primary duty of responsible citizens. The *Verein* took a place at once as the standard exemplar of method in social research for Germany. Its publications—reaching 164 volumes in 1923—have been among the most instructive attempts to introduce general social science methodology into productive investigation of social conditions.<sup>1</sup>

In this necessarily summary treatment of factors which proved to be evolutionary for sociology, arguments by contemporaries are often more revealing than external incidents. For example, the influence of the *Verein* was promoted in its early years by a journalistic discussion quite outside the proceedings of the organization—and promoted perhaps more energetically than by any activity within the organization itself. It is a luckless social movement which does not make enemies. Conflict is one of the conditions of the strength of group movements. The ancient foe of the men who formed the *Verein* was the earlier organization—*Der volkswirtschaftliche Kongress*. This body was more commercial than academic, although not exclusively technical in its aims. The new organization was on a more openly proclaimed theoretical basis, and its natural opponents were men of theory. At all events, the early professions of faith by the *Verein*, and by leaders among its members when speaking as individuals, were of a nature which would more directly challenge theorists. Practical men would not

<sup>1</sup> Small, "The Present Outlook of Social Science," *American Journal of Sociology*, XVIII (January, 1913), 433-69, is a general survey of the German drive toward objectivity. Among other things it quotes a description twenty years later by Professor Brentano, of the purposes and spirit of the *Verein*. That testimony should be read at this point, *op. cit.*, pp. 461-65.

The *Verein* contributed in more than one way to the convergence of influences which produced the American sociological movement. For the relation of the *Verein* to the American Economic Association, see Small, "Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXI (1916), 779-82.

so readily detect the bearings of the new views upon concrete affairs; or if their suspicions were aroused, they would not as readily become articulate in opposition.

Among the reactions produced by the innovators of this period, that of Treitschke against Schmoller was conspicuous and typical. It spent itself in a literary duel as notable as the Thibaut-Savigny and Menger-Schmoller controversies. We can indicate only some of its beginnings.

As we have seen, Schmoller had expressed himself at the constituent meeting of the *Verein* with a distinctness that was a sufficiently open challenge to the traditionalists. The challenge was not accepted by a first-rate champion of traditionalism until Schmoller had expressed himself more formally in the pages of *Preussische Jahrbücher* of which Treitschke was editor. At this distance the essay which became a storm center seems commonplace enough, but that is by relating it with our environment, not its own. It may count as a clear instance under the general form—"Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" If we came upon the essay today, without introduction, we might easily read it and not suspect that it contained anything incendiary, or even very sharply provoking to conservative thinkers. In fact, it actually was the means of precipitating a formulation of the conservative position by Treitschke, which set off the traditionalism from the progressivism of the time in such abrupt contrast that the antithesis of tendencies was thereafter notorious.

So far as can be judged by Treitschke's reply, the provocation in Schmoller's platform was less in its totality than in certain incidental expressions which Treitschke chose to interpret in an extravagant way.

The offending paper was entitled, "The Social Question and the Prussian State."<sup>1</sup> The general drift of the article may be

<sup>1</sup> In the introduction to his reply to Treitschke's attack on this paper, Schmoller intimates that it was prepared originally as an address to an audience of women. See Small's unpublished translation of *Über einige Grundfragen*, p. 8.

indicated in brief, and the particular expressions may be emphasized, which caused Treitschke to convert Schmoller into a monstrous man of straw, and to call upon all the resources of ancient and modern history to demolish him.

In the first place we must consider the paper as virtually, not ostensibly, a campaign document in which Schmoller tried to place the whole *Verein* ideal and program in its proper historical setting. It was in no sense an appeal to the masses. It was an argument not addressed only to the highest intellectual classes in Germany; it was intended as well for the eyes of the highest political authorities. and it was quite as distinctly a profession of "regularity" in support of the monarchy as it was an assertion of progressive social ideals in which the innovators hoped to enlist the monarchy.<sup>1</sup>

In the second place, the essay is evidently the labored manifesto of ideas which were as yet rather early in the process of ripening. As a brief of the progressives' case, it would hardly get a passing mark in any modern court. It is diffuse. It does not stick to the point. It pays too much attention to irrelevancies, or to things which were at best of only collateral importance, instead of driving home the big considerations. The palliation for all this is perhaps in the fact that the mind of Schmoller's public was not sufficiently prepared to be quite open to plainer publication of the main considerations. Perhaps Schmoller himself had not yet discerned the full bearings of all that the ethical movement had started.

In the third place, it indulges in forms of statement, both about historical facts and about social ideals, which lend themselves too readily to misinterpretation. As careful reading of Treitschke's reply would show, he took full advantage of these openings, and scored points as a debater against Schmoller which counted against the *Verein*, while they were really exhibits only of Treitschke's agility in making the most of an opponent's unguarded expressions.

<sup>1</sup> For documentation of Schmoller's monarchical preferences, see Small's unpublished translation of Schmoller's reply to Treitschke, p. 168.

In other words, Schmoller did not appear at an advantage in the first round. In sporting slang we might say he was "beaten on points." Treitschke "landed" more times than Schmoller did, but, to drop the figure, Treitschke's points were made after all by creating diversions upon forced constructions of Schmoller's meaning. They were smart tricks of debate, rather than real weakenings of the case which Schmoller advocated. The immediate result was a clearing up of Schmoller's own views, and presently a more extended expression of them.

The chief points of Schmoller's argument, stated now not in his own form but in paraphrase, were:

First, universal history is a succession of struggles by oppressed classes against oppressing classes, and the line of progress is a series of eliminations of force, brutality, and barbarism of previous types.

Second, the differences in the status of persons in a given social order have not corresponded to the respective merits of the persons; but they have been arbitrary in a degree that diminishes as civilization advances.

Under this proposition Schmoller uses phrases which Treitschke in his reply rather effectively attacks, e.g.:

The historical origin of social classes is . . . force, and that not so much the force of individuals as of whole clans and stocks, of whole social classes and peoples. The one stock subjugates and enslaves another. Thus arrives inequality of possessions and, what is of more importance, in consequence of this, inequality of culture. This condition, once established, is hereditary. The guilt and the wrong with which beginnings were made do not cease. Force merely becomes more refined. It is converted into fraud, into shrewd overreaching, into unjust exploitation of political power. Up to the present day there is no distribution of property and income in any people which is entirely free from this—so to speak—*tragic guilt*. This guilty element is the center about which social conflicts revolve.<sup>1</sup>

Third [in reply to destructive alternatives], When the force which larger possessions and higher culture confer is used by its possessors less for egoistic enjoyment than for activity in behalf of state or society, or the oppressed classes, this amounts not only to a certain expiation of the original wrong, but there arise in consequence those aristocratic forms of the state and of industry

<sup>1</sup> To be discussed in connection with Treitschke's reply.



which alone are capable of educating savage nature peoples to labor and to morality. They operate, so to speak, as the great industrial schools of humanity. They are capable of long undisturbed prosperity, although the time must come when they will have outlived their usefulness. At the same time, these aristocratic societary forms are the absolutely necessary major instruments of progress in the technical and intellectual elements of civilization.

Fourth, without going to the undesirable extreme of demanding equal rewards for unequal performances, modern conceptions of justice call for abolition of too unequal distribution. The aim toward which historical evolution evidently tends is progressive elimination of all class dominance and exploitation, with admission of all men to the higher goods of civilization [*alle Menschen zu den höheren Gütern der Kultur heranzurufen*].

We repeat that the significance of all this is not in the fact that an individual expressed it as his opinion, but in the fact that substantially these views were held by what soon proved to be the most influential body of academic theorists in Europe. These views soon passed from the status of mere opinion, and became the molders of German civic policy. For example, in the part of the debate entitled *Industry, Morality and Law*, Schmoller crystallizes one of the commonplaces of the ethical school in the sentence: "The whole economic demand is nothing else than a fragment of the concrete moral history of a given time and a given people."

Fifth, every great economic advance is a crisis for the whole morality of the advancing people. The more the possessing classes have, the more they feel it necessary to gain in addition. They look upon every opposition to their wishes as an uprising against economic order in general. Thereupon a new phase of social strife over this issue.

Sixth, from antiquity social conflicts have arisen over two chief points: first, the distribution of landed property; second, the unfreedom of persons.<sup>1</sup>

With so much as a general historical background, Schmoller passes to the past of the Prussian state in particular as follows:

Seventh, the reason why the revolution of 1789 did not occur in Germany, was primarily the *Prussian kings*. Their social policy reached down deeper, and accomplished more (in the way of protecting the weaker classes), than the

<sup>1</sup> A wide historical survey for illustrations follows.

English Tudors or the best French kings and statesmen, who were in some respects prototypes of the German benevolent despots.<sup>1</sup>

Then Schmoller goes on to specify typical programs in which the Prussian kings carried out a policy of promoting the interests of the weaker classes. It is not within our purpose to discuss these historical claims, as to their validity. Letting them stand for what they are worth, our interest in them here turns upon their strategic value at the time as appeals to German sentiment.

Eighth, this older patriarchal Prussian policy ended essentially with the adoption of the Stein-Hardenberg reforms, 1808; and gave way to the efforts of the people, in distinction from the government (which was described as utterly incompetent and unintelligent), to gain the most far-reaching political rights. The mistake of this movement was in its ignorance that the selfishness of property interests is bound to dominate over the other political interests, if the government affords no check.

Ninth, the new period has inherited the task of dealing with classes which for centuries have been distressed, miserable and mistreated. Suddenly left to themselves, and to the struggle of competition, they must necessarily lag behind by as much as the better situated classes forged ahead. Because of the advantages of capital in the new technique, the tremendous increase of production did not benefit the different social classes equally. It profited chiefly the privileged minority. Accordingly, the same laborer to whom new political rights were given every day, until a short time ago found himself in a worse economic situation every day. It could be only a matter of time when he would say to himself: "It seems that in political life, in service for the fatherland, I am to count as much as the most prominent and the richest . . . but in economic and social life the chasm between us is not only to remain but to be widened."<sup>2</sup>

Tenth, the social question has grown out of these conditions. It is the question between underpaid honest labor and overpaid possessors of economic advantage.

Eleventh, the demand for social justice is not to be hushed up by the reply that some of its champions are unworthy, e.g., the social democracy in general—in Treitschke's sneer "puerperal fever."

<sup>1</sup> Per contra, the French claim that the reason why the Revolution came in France instead of Germany was not that the French were more backward, but because they were more advanced than the Germans.

<sup>2</sup> Small, unpublished translation, p. 17. Cf. Phillip Gibbs, in *More That Must Be Told*.

Twelfth, as to the rights in the case, the facts are, first, that our present social conditions, our life and customs, our education and amusements, our dwellings and workshops, the training of children, and the morality in our lower classes, are very bad, and in the utmost need of reforms; second, "we are bound to look into the future, in order to be sensitive to the impression that the tremendous increase of wealth must, at least in part, accrue to the advantage of the previously disinherited classes, and *bring to them somewhat more participation in all the higher goods of civilization, in culture and comfort*, if we are not to declare ourselves mentally and morally bankrupt. We are bound to see that the lower classes have a right to struggle for these things, that their compact agitation for a better situation is a necessary and just product of our free political life. We are bound, therefore, to perceive that a temporary increase of wages does not solve the social question, but that the kernel of the matter consists in placing the laborer within other conditions of life and work, which shall make of him another man in all respects."<sup>1</sup>

Thirteenth, finally, two powers must be invoked; (a) public opinion must be aroused to the ethical principles involved; (b) government must resume a rôle as equalizer of class relationships parallel with the part of the Prussian monarchy in earlier periods. The monarchy and the bureaucracy must resolutely undertake the task of social equalization.

In other words, this was probably the most distinct formulation up to date, by a spokesman of academic opinion, of demand for the state policy in Prussia, and in Germany, which afterward became known as state socialism.

As we have intimated, on its intrinsic merits Wagner's address to the Church congress might well be celebrated as the initial action in the decisive campaign between German traditionalism and social reform. In principle Wagner had said everything—indeed if we compare the two utterances point by point, it is possible to contend that he really said more in expression of the contrast between the old and the new in German social ideals than can be found in Schmoller's essay. It was the latter, however, which actually became the center of conflict between the two tendencies. Schmoller's spokesmanship for the aroused conscience of German economists stung Treitschke to reply. He promptly began publication of a series

<sup>1</sup> The foregoing passage was Treitschke's chief aversion. To his mind the ideal was a chimerical defiance of the preordained limitations of the lower classes.

of papers under the collective title "Socialism and Its Patrons."<sup>1</sup> Schmoller defended himself in a series under the general title "On Certain Fundamental Questions of Right and of Economics."<sup>2</sup>

Our limits permit only a partial summary of this discussion. It would be profitable to study the entire controversy under the rubric: "Certain Illustrations of the Psychology of Transition." Promotive and arrestive attitudes toward social change are exhibited in high lights during the debate. These same attitudes, both in these two men and in many who resembled them respectively, were of high potency in forming antecedent ideas of scholars who afterward became forces in the American sociological movement. In view of this fact we must attempt to convey a general impression of the conflicting attitudes.

As we have said, on its intrinsic merits Wagner's address to the church congress might well be taken as the initial action in the decisive campaign between German conservatism and progressivism in the realm of economic theory and practice. In the same way, Rhode Island's Declaration of Independence from England, May 10, 1776, and the Virginia Declaration a little later, deserve far larger shares of the prestige which Americans have consented to symbolize by the Fourth of July than many of us are aware. This, by the way, is a sample of the persistent irony of history. One man labors, another enters into an inordinate share of the credit due to his predecessor's labor. Without presuming to appraise the relative importance of the earlier protagonists of the ethical idea, we present it as it appeared in action against the obstructionism of Treitschke.

<sup>1</sup> *Der Sozialismus und seine Gönner*; first paper dated June 20, 1874.

<sup>2</sup> *Über einige Grundfragen des Rechts und der Volkswirtschaft*.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE SCHMOLLER-TREITSCHKE CONTROVERSY. ILLUSTRATING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TRANSITION

History does repeat itself in the sense that, under similar circumstances, people react in correspondingly similar ways. Literary reconstruction of human experience, or written history, is instructive, in distinction from merely interesting, in direct ratio with its rendering of experience in terms of typical crises and corresponding reactions. The record of human thought has preserved the meaning terms of such typical crises more numerous and more revealingly than any other variety. We have recited some of the more obvious facts about two such passages in the development of thought about social science—the Thibaut-Savigny controversy, and the Menger-Schmoller debate. We shall allude later to three other instances of the same type—the Menger-Schäffle debate, the von Mohl-Treitschke debate, and the issue between Herbert Spencer and the English social reformers of his earlier years, as reflected in the essays collected under the title *The Man vs. the State*. At present it is in order to use some of the material we are gathering so as to illustrate certain recurrent behaviors in transition from one dominant type of thinking to another. By means of exhibits contained in the reactions between Schmoller and Treitschke over the issues raised by the leaders of the *Verein*, in particular over the proposal to substitute ethical standards for the so-called Manchesteristic standards of economic theory and practice, we shall try to identify certain forms of behavior which appear whenever innovation in thought or action brings promoters and opponents of the change into conflict.

The cant phrase, “psychological moment” corresponds to something which is very specific in reality, whether it can be analyzed



down to its elements in a given case or not. No matter how precisely an issue may be outlined in words, the group attention, feeling, and cognitive content must be correspondingly receptive if the stimulating action is to be followed by the appropriate response. Wagner's utterance evidently did not reach a prepared public. It is easy to imagine his audience as taking refuge in its self-satisfied smugness, which was too sure of itself to be shocked. The criticisms which his argument roused seem to have voiced no general consensus. Even the opposition of the conservatives must needs become more deliberate and self-conscious before it could give full force to its latent hostility to the progressive movement. It was Schmoller's spokesmanship for the aroused consciousness and conscience of German economists which called Treitschke to the defense of the established order, and thus signalized the collision of the old and the new. There are many points of resemblance between Treitschke's attitude and that of Chancellor Day in the quotation that follows. It appeared as a signed editorial in *Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*, June 17, 1912.

### THE PERIL OF OUR LAND

BY CHANCELLOR DAY OF SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

The men who teach that constitutions established on battlefields of human liberty are barriers of personal freedom, who ridicule courts of justice founded upon principles of eternal righteousness as arbitrarily oppressive of human rights, who preach class hate and pose as the defenders of the people, are followed by droves of the unthinking, who some day will awake to find themselves in a barren wilderness of anarchism and self-destructive socialism.

The peril of our land today is those teachers who appeal to the ignorance and passion of the people, arraying them against the institutions secured at Concord and Lexington, at Valley Forge and Monmouth, and defended by a million men whose graves were strewn with flowers a few days ago.

I wonder that the great sustaining, foundation class of our citizens do not resent this implication of ignorance, this infamous impeachment of their intelligence, and hurl such foes of our country down to their own place.

Nothing will bring us to immovable foundations, nothing will establish the perfect equilibrium of justice and content between all classes, so that the

*rich shall always apply the Golden Rule and the poor trust God and not complain;* but that true gospel preached by the Methodist Asbury and his mighty host, as on horseback they rode from the Atlantic to the far wilderness; by the Presbyterians and Episcopalians from the Canadas to the Appalachians; by the Baptists with their martyrs; by the Congregationalist Edwards, under whose preaching men held by the pillars of the church lest they drop into perdition; by heroic Lutherans, who have always insisted upon the liberty and responsibility of conscience, and by devoted Catholics, whose Marquettes, Nicollets, and Hennepins were found from the St. Lawrence to the Father of Waters.

In one sense such an utterance as the foregoing in our day is staggering. A modern man does not know where to begin, how far back in the rudiments of things to start, when he is suddenly called upon to express himself in reply to such amazing sophistry. Chancellor Day's demand really is that the millions of living men, whose ancestors destroyed feudalism and whose nearer ancestors destroyed political absolutism, and substituted constitutionalism, shall sit still and be content while a few men who have made money complete their work of nullifying democratic constitutions and of bringing the civilized world under the dominion of capitalistic oligarchy. To accuse of impiety toward the past the men who refuse to be silent against this tendency is precisely one with the claim that demand for a sane Fourth of July is defamation of the men who signed the Declaration of Independence; or that enforcing a pure food law is ingratitude to the Pilgrim Fathers who starved through their first winter in Massachusetts; or that improvement of safety devices on ocean steamers is an impeachment of Christopher Columbus.

The idea that the present balance of power in our capitalistic society is beyond criticism and correction is such a monstrous exhibit of provincial bias that it would be set down as an amateurish blunder in portraying life, if it were attributed to a character in fiction. It is well, however, to have a few monstrosities in real life to exhibit the absurdity of certain actual tendencies if they are

<sup>1</sup> Italics ours.

allowed to flourish without restraint. We have another, though much less preposterous, case in Treitschke.

A few more general observations must precede analysis of his first paper.

In the first place, the Germans have always taken their historians seriously. Of course it is in the nature of the case impossible to demonstrate such a generalization, but it seems to be true that, in proportion to their merits, German historians, for the last century and a half, have enjoyed relatively higher prestige than any other type of German scholars. If we analyze the writings of such a man as Justus Möser (1720-94), for instance, we are not left in doubt that he was a thinker of superior talents and merits; yet we are not likely to find the evidence on which wholly to justify the rating which his opinions enjoyed as expressions of wisdom derived from history.<sup>1</sup> Roscher calls him "the father of the historical school of jurisprudence" and "at the same time the greatest German national economist of the eighteenth century." During his lifetime and down past the middle of the nineteenth century this or some similar estimate of Möser crops out very frequently in the literature of German social science. He is often referred to in the same tone of awe-stricken reverence with which many German writers of the first half of the nineteenth century alluded to Goethe—as though his opinion on any subject from A to Z in the cyclopedia settled the matter. Möser was a man with very pronounced opinions upon subjects about which his historical pursuits furnished him with little or no basis for judgment. Yet the fact that he entertained judgments on those subjects seemed to get for those judgments the benefit of historical sanction. He figures in a certain stratum of German literature therefore as a sort of Sir Oracle on all sorts of social matters. In this respect he is a good illustration of a marked German tendency. The German historian is more of a factor in the calculation of Germans than any other scholar of proportional merit. The theory on which we may account for

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Roscher, *Gesch. d. National-Oekonomik in Deutschland*, p. 500.

this is that even scholars, and after them, of course, the general public, tend to assume that because a man is ostensibly studying past experience, therefore, his opinion on any subject must necessarily be a digest of past experience. Historians in all countries enjoy excessive benefits from this presumption; and we point to this fact without desiring to detract from the appreciation which proper appraisal of any historian's work authorizes. The fact is that this naïve presumption is as far from the truth as it would be to assume that because a man is a patent lawyer, he must necessarily be an authority upon admiralty practice. The German historian has had a more respectful hearing on a wider range of subjects than any other German scholar (always meaning in proportion to his claim to a hearing on the basis of critical knowledge of the subject in question).

In the second place, Treitschke is a vivid illustration of the actual aloofness of the academic type from the main current of affairs,<sup>1</sup> and its inability to sense proportions between the considerations which interest it and the factors which are decisive in a given social situation. We need not raise the question whether this weakness is more or less evident in the German academic type than in that of other nations; or whether it was more conspicuous a generation ago in Germany than it is now. The foible is real enough in the academic type always and everywhere, and the present case will be most instructive to us if we let it tell its full story without breaking its force by saying to ourselves that we are not as other men are. The live issue raised by Schmoller and his friends was whether the Germans could do more than they had done and were doing toward bringing their social conditions into more effective harmony with up-to-date insight into justice. Treitschke was right in his intuition and his logic that all such questions must be treated by men who are able to think, in connection with long looks backward and forward, and with broad surveys of the field

<sup>1</sup> In spite of the frequent connection to which we have referred in the case of the Cameralists, and later German social scientists, between academic and public functions.

of interests affected by the present alternatives. His typically academic mistake was *first*, in not being able to distinguish between historical experience which might be instructive about the real issue, and speculative questions of historical philosophy which turned attention only to pedantic trifles; and *second*, in his consequent inability to hit upon the proportion in which these considerations were timely in a case of actual social crisis. The consequence was that, in everything but motive, Treitschke's argument was as pitiable an exhibit of untimeliness and disproportionateness as Nero's fiddling while Rome was burning. There was an importunate situation to be met in real life, and Schmoller was trying to find out what the Germans could do about it. Treitschke's best was a pedantic attempt to shift the issue to a debating-society wrangle over the pros and cons of the philosophical conceit of the equality of man! No doubt right or wrong thinking on this subject has a bearing upon all other social thinking and acting; but there are always relativities of importance in social factors; and the urgent question was—equality or no equality—can the German nation afford to let the present state of competition in the labor market have the whole say about the sort of air German laborers shall breathe, and the food they shall eat, and the houses they shall live in, and the hours they shall work, and the scale of their wages?

Treitschke was as far from the strategic center of the conflict as von Holst was in his *Constitutional History of the United States* when he reached the assault upon Sumner by Brooks in the Senate. Instead of taking up the big problems of the extent to which Sumner and Brooks respectively represented opposite forms of social momentum, von Holst ignores that vital matter and occupies a series of pages with ponderous weighing of the trifling question whether "Bully Brooks" was a gentleman!<sup>1</sup>

It was in these trifles of academic pedantry that Treitschke had whatever advantages he had over Schmoller in the debate. Schmoller was certainly too anxious to generalize history into

<sup>1</sup>V, 318-33.



sanction for immediately appropriate action. His moral perceptions were more accurate than the historical formulas by means of which he attempted to commend them. With Treitschke the relation was reversed. His historical generalizations were safer than Schmoller's, but they were arbitrarily associated with the moral questions presented by the existing social situation. Treitschke was a paleontologist discoursing on the anatomy of extinct species, while Schmoller was trying to be a good Samaritan administering first aid to injured fellow-citizens.

Treitschke would seem to have had his eyes open when he said:

A profound revolution, such as Germany has experienced only once, in the days of Luther, has burst upon our popular life. With one bold leap we have passed from the meagerness of provincial civil life into the large circumstances of the national state. We have released the enormous economic forces of this nation for free competition; and while we have just begun to understand what money economy is, we are already surprised by the economic form of the future—credit economy—with an abundance of new structures.

So far he sees the tremendous change in actual conditions, but he cannot be just to the activities that have been stimulated by the change. He goes on:

This sudden convulsing of all the old order, and the frightful misery with which peoples always have to pay the price of transition to new economic forms, have lured modern socialism from its French home into our territory. So far, no really new fruitful idea has sprung from the German *Sozialdemokratie*. It has given us nothing which had not already been refuted by word and deed in France. But the leaders of socialism<sup>1</sup> command such a splendid type of confidence as has never before been found in German party life. They declare that black is white and white is black with such obstinate assurance that the innocent bystander involuntarily asks himself whether he is not perhaps laboring under some sort of an illusion. As experienced demagogues they know the temper of the masses, the yearning of the common man for a fixed, indubitable authority which shall overawe him. They know it will be possible to take from the people their belief in a better future only when the prospect of a fat present can be made immediately promising. Consequently they picture that naked

<sup>1</sup> I.e., Schmoller and the *Verein!*

nonsense, the lazy and sated vagabond life of the future in such definite outlines, with such brilliant colors, as though no doubt about the matter were possible.<sup>1</sup>

It would be a blunder as unpardonable as Treitschke's if we were to take a single case as proof of anything. We may be content with saying that Treitschke's case at this point is a sample of the sort of evidence which might be piled up as high as the biographies of all the historians would reach, tending to show that the experience of specialists in the study of history is no more assurance than the experience of any other specialist, of balanced judgment about the meaning of contemporary events. This perception was one of the important factors in the development of sociology. Men who had been trained in historical technique discovered that this technique alone as surely warped the judgment of scholars, as training in language alone gives a bent to the mind which does not necessarily insure trustworthy procedure in the experimental sciences. The universal tendency of historians is to overestimate the instructive value of past experience as compared with present experience. They sometimes reason with the tacit assumption that experience came to a definitive close before the contemporary conflicts of forces began. They imply that past experience has settled all the problems of life for all time, and that it is not only superfluous but impertinent to formulate, as problems of a distinct character, the crises confronted by living men. They are inclined to assume that past experience has yielded precepts competent to control the present. This is equivalent to the notion that the schoolboy's last year's problems in fractions could settle his this year's problems in cube root.

Toward the close of his eminent career, Professor von Holst gave an exhibition of this foible. He discoursed in most impassioned manner, and in pontifical tone, upon the thesis that annexation of the Sandwich Islands by the United States would be the beginning of the end of the Republic. In reality, however, his

<sup>1</sup> Note that Treitschke was saying this by innuendo of the paper of Schmoller which we have just epitomized!

historical studies had never touched closely upon those specific state relations which were and are to be pivotal between the peoples bordering the Pacific. He was, therefore, almost as amateurish on the subject as the average American college graduate. The point is that he was nevertheless listened to because he was a historian.

These typical preconceptions, which may be found so often in the deliverances of historians about the actual human situation of their own time, falsify the past as well as the present. They fail fully to visualize the lusty conflict of human interests, in the exercise of human equipments, which was always the reality in the past, instead of the mere impersonal play of cosmic or logical forces. They fail still more to see that this same conflict is going on today between men whose interests are still developing. They consequently fail to see that moral judgments and battles for the enforcement of moral judgments today must turn more on the appraisals of values passed by living men than upon logical deductions from conclusions reached by past men. In other words, the historical habit inclines to the presupposition that men's destinies are decided more by the past than by the present. The typical habit of the constructive type of mind is to presume that men's destinies are decided more by the present than by the past. This is the thesis and antithesis of conservatism and progressivism. Neither without the other gives the synthesis which expresses reality. It is not safe to assume beforehand that either the past or the present considered independently should be the chief factor—say in settling the next strike: i.e., whether our inherited system of laws should be the primary factor, or considerations of immediate expediency, or considerations of principles of justice not yet worked out.

We might say the same thing in this way: It is the foible of historians to attempt to state present situations in terms of past situations. As a matter of logical classification this is the same mistake which Pythagorus committed in attempting to explain

all being in numerical terms—as though quantity were the only factor of reality. That is, when they turn their attention to contemporary situations the historians are likely to ignore the variations in consequence of the added or modified factors, which circumstances have injected into the later situation, by which it is differentiated from the situations which they think they have interpreted in the past; and they consequently feel authorized to bring over their interpretation of the past and make it cover the issues of the present. That is, they expect the Bill of Rights (1689) to settle the pending coal strike. More than this, the historical habit is in principle the attitude of the established classes, the people who have arrived and secured their positions. They feel that the problems of life have been settled at last, and that what remains is merely to take this settlement as fixed for all time and make the most of it.

To go back to Treitschke: His eyes were not open wide enough to see the meaning of the details that he discovered. He could not see in the social unrest of his time the on-going of the main process of life, the development of more evolved wants out of the less evolved satisfactions, combined with discovery of new ranges of means of satisfaction. He could see, in the outreachings of the unsatisfied, nothing but vandalism, barbarous destructiveness toward permanent social achievement.

Let us look a moment at the assertion that the social democratic movement had given the Germans “nothing which had not already been refuted by word and deed in France.” If this refers merely to philosophical propositions and to concrete devices, a good case might be made for the assertion. But what really had been refuted in France? That which was really refuted in France was the old régime, and the refutation of it was the Revolution. The Revolution incidentally refuted its own peculiar propositions and projects to be sure, but it did not refute life. It vindicated life; and that was the real issue between the old régime and the Revolution. The truth that triumphed in the Revolution was that when institutions begin to

set arbitrary bounds to the development of life, they begin to fore-ordain their own doom. There was more life in France than the horizon of the 80,000 in the court coterie at Versailles could understand, and the pulsations of that life were the Revolution. The thing that the conservative intellect never can grasp is that the men at the lowest rung of the social ladder today are men with endowment at least on a level with that of the remote ancestors of all the people who have arrived at the heights of civilization. There is no sufficient reason to doubt that, if all the population of the earth except the manual laborers were destroyed today, in a few centuries the descendants of these present laborers would have recovered all the arts and refinements which we now possess, and would proceed to carry on civilization from the point where it was interrupted. The static sort of thinkers cannot entertain the idea that it is the orderly procession of the generations for those who come into life on a lower plane of advantage to take knowledge of the higher orders of achievement which have been gained by men before them, and to make those achievements marks for their own striving. The ambitions of the backward classes ought to be hailed with rejoicing as humanity's reassertion of its vitality. To the type of mind which can see social safety only in holding things as they are, continuation of the very process which has made it possible for things to be as they are looks like destruction.

This type of thinking is illustrated again by the following paragraph from a Chicago paper of July 1, 1912:

*The Rev. — of the — Church attacked the progressives in politics in an address last evening on "Mistakes of the Progressives."*

The so-called progressives are accomplishing nothing in separating the people into classes and arraying these classes against each other. Calling people liars and train robbers is not conducive to national prosperity and national peace. It has become almost a reproach for a man to be prosperous and possess wealth. He is pointed out on the street as a plutocrat; while the hero of modern society is too often the man who is shiftless and incapable. There are three essential principles to happiness and prosperity of the nation and the protection of the people: liberty, equality, and fraternity. Equality



and liberty demand that the rich man have just as much consideration before the law as the poor man.

We must make allowance for the reporter, of course, and we may not assume without verification that the person quoted said exactly what was printed. The paragraph as it stands, however, is a typical reflection of another angle of the statical attitude, viz., reliance upon mere words which have a historical meaning; but resorted to as finalities in present conditions they are merely means of dodging the duty of thinking.

Referring once more to Treitschke's taunt that the German social democratic movement had proposed nothing that had not already been disposed of in France, his whole argument is an effort to identify the *Verein* with the social democracy, so we may take him at his word in this respect, and submit that the two main planks in the platform of the *Verein* were virtually new social factors, viz.: (1) *All socio-economic questions are ethical questions and must be considered as such.* (2) *It is the task of state and society to study human conditions within their respective spheres, and to act as a moral unit in transforming those conditions, so far as the means are controllable, in the interest of progressive sharing by all the members of the group in all the achievements of humanity.* These cardinal principles of the *Verein* were new not in the sense that no one had ever heard of them before.<sup>1</sup> They were in substance the burden of the preaching of the later Hebrew prophets, and it would be very superficial and hasty reading which did not find them implied in Jesus' words: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." As we have said repeatedly, the collectivistic traditions of the Germans were reiterated in these new campaign formulas; so that in one sense

<sup>1</sup> It is very hard to find absolute beginnings of anything in human thought. For example, the Golden Rule was approached in Hebrew folk-consciousness long before it received its Christian formulation. We find a negative version, for instance, in the apocryphal book of Tobias: "Do not do anything to anyone that you would not want him to do to you."—Translated from iv, 16, of Luther's version.

they were older than any European civilization, and in their German form three or four centuries older than the recent empire. On the other hand they were new in the only sense in which, as a rule, any social principle can be new in the modern world: i.e., as energizings, vitalizings, reincarnations, and realignments of the old. It would in this sense be one of the most spectacular originalities in history, if a party in power, or fighting for power in the United States, should actually propose to make the Golden Rule the arbiter of its policy in respect to the tariff. The principles of the *Verein* were in this sense projections of new moral forces into the German social problem.

Again, we may well be less sure that a typical tendency is illustrated, but we may venture hypothetically the generalization that the historical habit in itself predisposes to a substitution of conventional classifications of present activities for valid moral appraisals. Treitschke seems to be a clear case in point (although, as was observed before, we must guard against assuming that one case proves anything). The mental process involved in the error that we are now pointing out is substantially this (to express it in a particular instance instead of abstractly): "Germany achieved a great gain in civilization by abolishing benevolent despotism and substituting constitutional monarchy. Therefore, opposition to constitutional monarchy is opposition to civilization." The fallacy of this reasoning is the begging of the question involved in identifying "opposition to constitutional monarchy" with the obstructive activities which retarded the original achievement of constitutional monarchy, instead of ascertaining whether "opposition to constitutional monarchy now," while in form a negative action, is not really a continuance of constructive activity, i.e., an opposition not to anything that was an actual gain for civilization, but a repudiation of something in constitutional monarchy which now retards further gain in civilization.

Perhaps we can see this typical fallacy more plainly in terms of a familiar American argument. "The Republican party is the

party of progress. The Republican party freed the slaves and saved the Union. Therefore, it is striking a blow at progress to withdraw support from the Republican party." From the standpoint of pure logic, this pretense of reasoning is drivell. Whether the Republican party is entitled to the support of good citizens now or not, turns on what it is now trying to do, or refusing to do. We are not now freeing the slaves, nor saving the Union, any more than we are now learning how to apply the power of steam to machinery. Let us assume for the sake of illustration that the vital domestic problem for Americans at the present moment is the task of making our professedly representative institutions more genuinely representative. That being the case, the question whether the Republican party deserves the support of good citizens, turns not on sentimental consideration of what that party did when another piece of work was the order of the day, but on the balance of evidence as to the availability of that party for better work than may be expected of any other party upon our present task.

Whether or not we have called attention to an actual tendency of historical specialization in general, Treitschke certainly furnished a striking instance of this misinterpretation of the moral meaning of a contemporary social movement. Instead of admitting the scientific validity of the principle of the *Verein* that the unrest of the time calls upon all scholars to study the conditions and find out what they actually mean, he begins with superficial slander of the social democrats. The sentence preceding the quotation in which he recognizes the change in economic conditions, reads: "In the last analysis this army of complaints which hurls itself against civic society serves only as a convenient protection of the flanks of the socialists, *the sworn enemies of all noble culture.*"<sup>1</sup>

Then following the quotation, Treitschke continues: "The controlling idea of the whole movement is unmistakably naked sensualism, radical repudiation of all that which raises man above the beast."

<sup>1</sup> Italics ours.

This indictment is really the major premise of Treitschke's entire argument; or perhaps the better figure is that it is the first clause in his declaration, and his argument continually harks back to this assertion. In another connection we have given our estimate of this phase of the controversy in the form which seems to imply all that needs to be said about it, viz.: It is the private secretary of Dives branding Lazarus at the gate as a sensualist for wanting some of the crumbs. The spokesmen of satiety make themselves and their social theories ridiculous when they denounce workingmen for wanting security of a decent standard of life. Of course the manual laborer is more interested in a steady job under conditions that will assure himself and his family the means of leading worthy human lives than he is in supplying the Kaiser with funds to turn the *Siegesallee* into a free museum of graven images of the Hohenzollern genealogy. And the judgment of civilization is with the manual laborer—not that there should be less art in civilization, but that there should be more of the necessities of life.

It should be said once for all that there is no need of softening down any of the facts to which Treitschke refers in support of his superficial interpretation that the social democratic movement is essentially sensualism. It would be quite as true to describe the quest of the Pole by Lieutenant Greely and his party as essentially sensualism, because their first actions when they were found at the point of death from starvation were the instinctive actions of the basic animal. First live, then live toward the higher levels. It would ignore all the precedents throughout the ascent of men from barbarism to civilization to blame the backward classes for backward ways of expressing their interests. Anything else would be uncanny. The man who fights brutally for his job may get the courage for his fight from his ambition to send his daughter to a school of music and his son to college. We need not defend any of the brutalities of the social conflict, on the one side more than on the other; but it ill becomes men who claim to look upon human affairs through the perspective of history to confound incidents of the conflict with its main impulse.

There is another typical factor in Treitschke's attitude, which we may pass with a single observation, viz., his attempt to belittle the social movement, the rising tide of popular consciousness, by insinuating that it is merely the noisy pretentiousness of a few self-seeking disturbers of the peace. Even if this were true, the task of society would nevertheless be just as constant, to study its own conditions, and to see whether its institutions are promoting or retarding progress.

It is merely a variation of the two mistakes just pointed out when Treitschke attempts to reduce the situation as described by Schmoller to a bare conflict between the mob spirit and German culture. There had been labor mobs in Germany before Treitschke, and there have been many more since, but to make mob phenomena the measure of the situation was to put on exhibition the universal academic propensity to substitute *inferences from words and propositions* for objective analysis of realities. Schmoller was not a mob, and the *Verein* was not a mob, and the great producing stratum of the German people was not a mob, and the clashing interests of labor and capital were actual factors in German life, whether they were trying to become articulate in mobs or legislation, or socialistic theories, or academic essays. Treitschke sneers at the very phrase "social question." He calls it "this huxter's expression of neo-Napoleonic invention which seems unfortunately to have found a lodging in our uncomplaining language." Thus he really undertakes to show that there is no "social question." He says:

Everyone who loves German civilization must without reserve stand up for that economic order which supports and carries that civilization. We can do justice to the legitimate demands of the masses—and they are all too numerous—only when we precisely know and fearlessly declare what we will grant them.

Here speaks the convinced traditionalist. His position is not that there are no evils in the human lot which benevolent men are bound to mitigate. It is rather, first, that the final form of industrial society has been reached, and that formulations of issues between social classes are henceforth impertinent. The class



stratification as it now exists is here to stay. If the ruling class can make improvements in details of the workings of the institutions that have now reached perfection in their general structure, it is their duty to do so; but this is all a matter of benevolence on the part of the controlling class, not something which may raise any legitimate questions about the permanence of its control.

This is the point for mention of another typical aspect of conservative thinking in transition periods. It may be expressed as a temporary dualism between specific feelings and volitions which are of the coming period, combined in the same person with reasonings on general principles which are essentially of the waning period. Quite a collection of passages might be culled from these three essays of Treitschke which, apart from their context, read like arguments in support of Schmoller's program. If that platform had been put merely in terms of more generous patronage of laborers by the higher classes, Treitschke would have applauded with all his might. The offense in his eyes consisted in speaking of improved conditions of laborers in terms of *social justice*. His thesis was that the existing social order represented the culmination of justice, and reorganization of that order would necessarily represent a backward step in civilization. The controlling classes in the perfect social order must henceforth learn how to be more benevolent. They cannot compromise their class control without making the demoralized social order less just.

We return to more specific points in Treitschke's attack. In supporting the foregoing claim, Treitschke goes far afield for sustaining historical generalizations. He first reconstructs human experience in correction of Schmoller's proposition: "The economic stratification of classes springs from wrong and violence." He takes particular offense at the phrase "tragic guilt," as Schmoller uses it in referring to the course of history.

This is one of the cases to which reference was made in our account of Schmoller's essay. The form of expression invited the reply which Treitschke makes the most of, viz.: Conquest of weaker

groups by stronger, enslavement of the conquered, and the founding of permanent social stratification upon this arrangement, was merely the inevitable working out of the law of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence. It is accusing the order of nature to apply the epithets "wrong" and "guilt" to these stages in the evolution of society.

This answer was far more conclusive in 1874 than it would be today; and it was tactically a blunder for Schmoller to open his guard to such a blow. He was not ready, as every student of social evolution is now ready with the reply, "Very well, have it so if you please, for the periods when only brute strength had been evolved. But after the power of moral discrimination has been evolved, perpetuation of distinctions between men which do not correspond with the functional values of men in contributing to further moral evolution is violence and wrong and injustice, and thus the arrest of evolution." In 1874, the earlier brutish implications of the struggle-for-existence idea were so impressive that Treitschke was undoubtedly thought by a large following to have scored heavily for conservatism by this appeal to a conception which was then at the height of its influence.

In pressing his argument from these premises, Treitschke accuses the socialists, and Schmoller as their spokesman in particular, of the primordial error of reasoning "not from the nature of the individual person, but from the nature of society." This particular diagnosis does not seem very consistent with the immediately following charge that socialism is at bottom Rousseauism; but we will not stop to consider that incongruity, but merely to quote the assertion:

Here emerges at once the fundamental mistake of all the socialists and of many learned national economists who look down with pity upon the rationalism of the eighteenth century. In all their ideas we detect the voice of Jean Jacques Rousseau. One and all of them stand, most of them without being aware of it, upon the illusion of the natural equality of men. Whoever has once looked through this colored glass is never more in a situation to observe historical matters without prejudice. Whoever is willing, however, to learn humbly from history must begin with the perception that nature forms all her higher creatures unequally.

It would be useless to speculate here about the correctness of Treitschke's assertion that as a rule the socialists believed in the "natural equality of men." Be that as it may, it was a most obvious perversion of Schmoller's meaning to force such a construction upon his views. He no more believed in "natural equality" in the Rousseau sense than Treitschke did, and it is difficult at this distance to understand how a candid opponent could justify himself in bringing a charge which seems to readers now so absurdly unwarranted. Treitschke was doubtless honest, and our explanation of his reasoning must have recourse to the hypothesis that he had not overcome the nightmare of the conservative class that all criticisms of the established order must necessarily be merely masked reappearances of that fictitious "natural equality" which shrieked its shrillest note in *The Terror*. Treitschke enters upon a labored, but entirely gratuitous, refutation of the "tragic guilt" and the "natural equality" idea, in which he incidentally develops a very clear expression of the "class conflict" factor in human history, apparently without a thought that he was contributing to the very conclusion which Marx was at the same time trying to develop. This whole component of the argument, however, is merely a clouding of the issue, although we do not accuse Treitschke of intending any such trickery. He thought he was arguing to a real point. Although Schmoller did not make his meaning as plain in his first essay as he did in his rejoinder, no present reader can doubt his original intention. To suppose that Schmoller was tainted with communism, that he ever for a moment dallied with the notion that a pro rata distribution of economic goods ever might, could, would, or should become the order of society, was as extravagant as to suppose he would have the professors in the University of Berlin appointed by drawing lots on tickets distributed throughout the population of Germany.

What Schmoller meant by his phrase, "all men should be led to share in all the goods of civilization," was that the moment society makes an advance in the technique of exploiting nature, it should

thereupon become a little easier for every member of society to obtain the means of satisfying his material wants. After a more efficient technique of transportation has been developed, the ends of the earth should be brought a little nearer even to the common man than they had been before. After we have learned something new about the nature of disease, and means of prevention and remedy, the percentage of suffering and the mortality rate, even in the less fortunate strata of society, should be somewhat reduced. After we have gained a new insight into justice, that achievement should not be monopolized in a class, but it should be generalized so as to confer some measure of benefit upon all classes. Not that prince and peasant should occupy the same kind of dwelling, but that palace and cottage should both be more sanitary than they were before we knew anything about bacteriology. Not that the railroad manager and the trainman should have the same conditions of work and the same wages, but that safety appliances and schedules of hours on duty should diminish needless differences in the conditions of labor between manager and trainman. Not that employer and employee should have equal shares in the product, but that every hindrance which progressive moral insight discovers to fair representation of both interests shall be removed from the conditions which determine the basis of distribution.

Treitschke did not discuss Schmoller's position. He discussed the absurdities of views which have been held substantially by a great many people, but it was trifling to drag them into the case which the organization of the *Verein* represented.

In the course of this mistaken and misleading discussion, Treitschke finds it necessary, in order to establish a base of operations against the reform movement, to assert social absolutism as a principle in contradiction of the idea of ceaseless progression in society. He takes Lassalle as the awful example, in his favorite formula: "Social institutions are historical not logical categories." That is, social institutions are men's achievements, up to a certain date, in their perpetual encounter with conditions; but as the condi-

tions change and men's competence to understand and cope with the conditions changes, institutions also certainly change as men continue to match their purposes and powers against the conditions. "Not so!" asserted Treitschke. "*Absolute* moral ideas must be present in history."

Herewith Treitschke presents another typical situation in the psychology and logic of transition. What does he mean by the term "absolute"? Does he mean one sharply defined and invariable concept, or does he mean to keep the term for use with one force in one connection, and a quite different force in another? Whatever his intention, what actual part does the word play in his essay? Probably there was a sense in which the generalization was as convincing to Schmoller as to Treitschke. So far as we can make out, there is no functionalist or pragmatist or behaviorist in our generation who does not, when pushed to his last lines of defense, have some sort of sheet anchorage for his thinking in some kind of recourse to the conception of a moral absolute (or quasi- or brevet-absolute!) underlying visible variation in human affairs. Treitschke's assertion that there must be present in history certain "absolute moral ideas," appeals to a certain response in every serious mind. But there is a trick, a juggle, a logical sleight-of-hand performance in pleading this general proposition. When we analyze the force of the appeal we find that it gets its value for Treitschke's purpose by that same old sophism of the ambiguous middle term which has so often given empty victory to assertive dogmatists. Suppose we reply: "Yes, there are absolute moral ideas in history, and one of them is the illimitable perfectibility of moral conditions, instead of the blind old illusion of the immutability of conventionalities." This is a perfectly good checkmate for the absolutists' attack. That is, we concede the principle, but we deny the traditionalists' application of the principle.

The conclusion which Treitschke tries to draw from the principle is this: "Ergo, German institutions as they now stand are absolute." There is, however, neither logical nor empirical sequence between



the two propositions, viz., "There are absolute moral ideas in history," and the implicit conclusion which Treitschke suggests by begging of the question: "Therefore, present German institutions are absolute." The very illustrations to which he appeals are refutations of that notion of the absolute which he tries to get into the argument. Thus he specifies *marriage*, *property*, and *the articulation of society*, as "moral ideas which . . . alter their form in endless variation, yet without changing their essence." In other words, he thereby confesses that they are not "absolute" at all in any sense which would be material to the issue represented by the *Verein*. Take marriage, for instance, in the most nearly unalterable form in which we have it in modern society, i.e., in the law of the Catholic church. The Catholic law of marriage does not in purpose nor in effect represent an "absolute," but merely an irreducible minimum. There is nothing in the law of the Catholic church to prevent progressive sublimation of the relations of the monogamous husband and wife to unimaginable degrees. The church law of the marriage relation is merely a definition of the lowest terms upon which the alliance of a man and a woman can have the sanctions of religion. The highest terms possible within the relationship may have been achieved by rare persons here and there, or they may not. At all events the monogamous family as defined in the law of the church is merely the external framework of a spiritual relationship between husband and wife, parents and children, which is evidently capable of measureless expansion and enrichment and elaboration, through mutual exercise of confidence, fidelity, respect, social, intellectual, and moral stimulus, and reciprocity. Consequently, within this framework one family might differ from another by degrees as great as those that separate the acknowledged benefactor of mankind from the mere negative mediocrity who disobeys no statute law, yet accomplishes nothing particularly creditable to a man. So with property, and the class formations in societies. Instead of being absolute, they always have been—considering long stretches of time—and they probably always will

be in a movement of transformation in the cumulative process of expressing formative interests which, whether we call them absolute or not, incessantly vary their social realization. Instead of being "absolute" then, in any sense that conflicts with the concept or the achievement of improvement, each of the institutions which Treitschke cites as examples—the German family, the German property system, the German class structure—had not only been in the course of modification during the previous century but has been undergoing quite as obvious modifications ever since. Surely "absolutes" as plastic as that are not absolute.

One is at a loss whether to interpret Treitschke's use of the "moral absolute" concept in attempting to dislodge the idea of historical adaptation, as dogmatic arrogance or as the desperation of cowardice. Whether it is one or the other, or some of both, it is pitiable futility of logical form in place of objective recognition of facts. Reduced to its lowest terms, the issue which Schmoller had represented was: *German institutions may be improved so as to do relatively more justice to the belated classes.* Treitschke's answer was: *The thought of changing the structure of German society is a proposal to alter the absolute.* Whichever of the debaters made the most of his case simply as one side of a logical sparring match, Treitschke was trying to define the human reality out of existence, while Schmoller was speaking for the omnipresent human process. Treitschke might whistle up his own courage, and give heart to men whose wish was for the permanence of things as they were, but he was asserting that experience is what it is not. It is the process of life for backward interests to fight for their own, and so long as there are contentions among men as to what is each one's own, it will be both stupid and futile for either contestant to conjure up a bogey "absolute" to bar his opponent from struggling for his own. We must speak with caution here. Perhaps it is better simply to ask a question: Is it typical of the psychology of transition to throw dust in the air, to becloud the issue, in particular to invoke some sort of an absolute to halt progress? When we say: "No, that would be un-American," "that would violate the discipline

of the party," "that would violate the sacredness of property," we are appealing to so many imitation absolutes, each of which, if it works according to the intention with which it is invoked, suspends the valid process of ascertaining the values of conduct from inquiry into its functional workings. We simply ask again: to what degree is this substitution of taboo for inquiry typical of transition in general? We must be on the watch for it in all theoretical or practical treatment of social problems.

There immediately follows a passage which illustrates another familiar aspect of the psychology of transition, viz., *the grasp of a perception which is progressive in its chief meaning, but apprehension of it only in a form and degree which lend themselves to defense of the traditional*. Treitschke's phrase for the particular idea at this point is "*the historical delimitation of all human life*." What he means is one of the foundation ideas of modern sociology, viz., that personality is always on the one side a function of the previous and contemporary group experience. We might abstract the passage and use it in a collection of select sociological readings. The idea has hardly been expressed better anywhere. The use to which Treitschke tries to put the perception which he so well expresses is, however, to carry the conclusion: *therefore, being a historical product, a human condition cannot be transformed by deliberate continuance of the historical process!* This was the precise issue later between Herbert Spencer and Lester F. Ward. Today practically every psychologist and sociologist says: "Because we have seen that man is a product of a historical process, therefore on with the process! Let us men raise ourselves to men of higher powers by a more conscious process, and with the use of accumulating resources for achievement in pursuance of the human program which has been going on less consciously and with inferior equipment, up to the present time."

The passage reads:

Man alone is an historical existence, and hence the one true societary being. He receives in language and morality, in law and industry, the works of the fathers. They live with him and he is effective by means of them. He

stands as a living, and if he wills, a conscious link in the chain of times. Step by step he feels the limitations which are set to the historical will. He lives only in and through submitting himself to the aggregate culture of his people. What occasionally oppresses a genius by appearing to be a narrowing fetter is for the inert majority a wholesome spur to activity and progress. The generations of a people's life are joined together and limited by a community of views about life, from which even the strong man cannot break away. How eloquently did Niebuhr champion against Fichte, the glorifier of the unlimited power of the will, the noble theorem that the richest poetic gifts could not have produced a complete work of art in the days of Alexander the Great! The strong as well as the weak feel this dependence. The business man loses money and trouble when he offers goods for sale which no longer satisfy the wants of his time. The most talented inventor starves, if his creative idea outruns the intelligence of the time. Ten years later, perhaps, the same idea brings new well-being to thousands, and the name of the dead lives in all mouths. Such tragic cases, which the socialists love to exploit in charges against society, spring necessarily from the nature of man as an historical being. The recurrence of them could not be prevented by any conceivable form of social order, for who can deceive himself with the fond illusion that King Mob, if he came to power in Icaria, would better and more promptly evaluate the ideas of great minds than the public opinion of today in the market of free competition.

The last sentence is a perfectly valid application of the analysis, so far as it goes, but it is equally valid to go a step farther and to conclude that: after men have carried on this process of historical development some stages more, they may be able to substitute something that will do better than either King Mob or "free competition," in "evaluating the ideas of great minds" or indeed any other great or petty human activities. To be able to suppose that this perception of the gradual forming of personalities through historical cause and effect amounts to a reason why the *Verein* should not go ahead with its constructive program is almost certainly an incident of social transition. It is a case of partially thinking things through, of seeing part way through the connections of relations, and of jumping at conclusions instead of tracing out the rest of the relations. We should now say: Because German society is a historical product, the work of all the Germans, with such help

and hindrance as they have had from the rest of mankind for centuries, therefore, it is not only permissible and desirable, but inevitable that the Germans, such as they have thus historically become, should exert their personality as their predecessors did in being themselves, that is, in exerting themselves, and thus in becoming more completely themselves, and so in continuing the process of creating their successors.

Treitschke's alternative was the opposite of all this—Because our generation is a historical product, therefore the institutions of our generation are finalities. In other words, this is a conception of the historical process which, if taken literally, would make the process a constant march up to our own time, but an eternal halt forever after.

Once more, just as Treitschke has made use of the ambiguous middle term "absolute" to support his plea for immutability of existing German institutions, so he constructs another argument on the same ground plan by the same sophistical use of the term "aristocratic." His primary proposition is: "The civic society of a wealthy people is always an aristocracy even under a democratic constitution." Again we may accept the generalization, but we must demand: what of it? Treitschke's effort is to deduce from the proposition the conclusion: "Therefore, the same sort of aristocracy, the same class structure with the same kind and degree of power over the rest of the community which now exists in Germany, must remain forever." There was nothing whatever in the program of the *Verein*, or in the argument of Schmoller, which might not have been expressed with complete accuracy in terms of aristocracy and mediocrity. We might paraphrase the reform arguments throughout in variations of the proposition: We must develop a higher type of aristocracy in Germany to serve better in discharge of the tasks now in sight, including leadership of a higher grade of mediocrity. Schmoller's whole argument was to the effect that the Prussian monarchy, and the bureaucratic organization under the monarchy, must take the lead in the work of improvement



next in order. This is farthest from a denial that aristocracy is a universal feature of economically prosperous societies. It is rather a proclamation that aristocracy, like every other normal human relationship, is itself in the process of evolution. Exchange of better functioning aristocracies for worse functioning aristocracies is one of the most familiar and effective steps in social improvement.

This, by the way, is a commonplace in our American type of party government. We are merely not in the habit of expressing it in these terms. We are familiar with the proposition that political reform in the United States consists chiefly in exchanging one political machine for another, "turning the rascals out." The party machine is the American political aristocracy. Every organization of leadership is an aristocracy within its sphere of influence. Mr. Roosevelt's attempt to capture the government for a new party in 1912 might have been described, if successful, as the rise of a newer aristocracy to compete with the older aristocracies composing the Republican and Democratic party machines. The valid argument for or against the change in either the German or the American case was not that either change would be an attempted abolition of the aristocracy necessary to the relationship of leaders to led. The only pertinent argument was that the aristocracy involved in the older or the newer régime, in either case, was an aristocracy which seemed better adapted to the tasks of its time than the type of aristocracy which it opposed.

After exploiting as well as he could the assumed absoluteness of aristocracy, Treitschke returns to another of his negations, which we have already sufficiently noticed. He says: "*It is by no means the task of history to introduce all men to the enjoyment of all the goods of civilization. . . .*" He continues:

There is one way only to give all men all the goods of civilization. It is as simple as it is sure. Merely turn loose the beast in men, reduce the scale of general culture so low that the sage can know, enjoy, and possess no more than the fool, take the rule, since a community cannot exist without leadership, out of the hands of the cultured and rich and transfer it to the fists of the rude and the poor, i.e. to King Mob, and the hideous *égaliser les intelligences* will be literally realized.

Without resorting to the explanation that Treitschke was intentionally misrepresenting the reformers, we have no way of accounting for his position except as an exhibit of paralyzed vision. In accordance with what we have said above, there is no difficulty whatever in writing specifications of conceivably long reaches of advance for the multitude in appropriating all the goods of civilization, without a semblance of communism, without a modification in present social structure, but simply in the course of operating our present social institutions with easily imaginable sublimation of social aims. Indeed, just this has been going on to a considerable degree during the last generation in all the civilized countries of the world. Our growing social purpose is that the minimum member of a civilized community shall start life with a sound body; and to insure this we are closing in on one another with demands that none but the fit shall propagate their kind. We are resolving that the units of coming generations shall start in communities equipped with all the known sanitary and hygienic appliances to assure physical conditions of living in accordance with our present knowledge of the laws of health. We are making up our minds that all children and youth shall have a chance to acquire the rudimentary technique of intelligent partnership in the world's work; the elementary knowledge which facilitates communication of ideas and some training for occupational efficiency, which shall make the individual able to supply some social demand. We are insisting upon a level of competition in all occupations which shall not permit work to exhaust the powers of workers, but shall leave a margin of time and strength for those human interests to which the bread-winning activities should be tributary. We are learning how to combine social resources so that those goods of life which only the favored few could command by their private resources may be within the reach of the many through wise use of common resources—playgrounds, parks, amusements, music, and the other arts, higher vocational and general education, the scientific output of museums, laboratories, institutes for research, the advantages of publicity through all the services of printers' art and publishers'

enterprise, the ministries of religion, through extension of religious activities so that they will find men everywhere and need not be sought far from the ordinary man's orbit. We are working out institutions for the insurance through life of every socially loyal man and woman; so that all may help to bear the burden of those incalculable accidents of life to which each is exposed, and none may be left to the sheer mercy of chance, provided he has faithfully tried to fill his place in the world's program.

This is an ideal which might conceivably have been carried out in Russia, if the Czar had been a sufficiently strong benevolent despot to control the Grand Ducal oligarchy in assent to the program. It would not, so far, necessarily have changed the external structure of Russia nor of a more civilized state.

There is one item in the schedule of typical human goods, to be sure, which the titles mentioned do not cover. High in the ranks of the goods of life is exercise of *self-determination*, expression of one's own valuation of one's own interests, both as a person and as a partner in society, without arbitrary suppression of one's individual initiative by any other person or interest; the function of self-government in the individual, and of sharing in proportion to the functional value of the personal equation of each in the self-government of the groups to which each belongs. This is a human good which must certainly change social structures in proportion as it is achieved by larger fractions of mankind, till no vestige is left in civilized communities of arbitrary superiority of one man or one class over another. Realization of this good is a growing aim of modern communities—growing not merely in reality, but growing also in definiteness of conscious purpose and program. Every interest existing among the members of communities must be recognized as having its proportional claims to unfettered suffrage in the community councils. Whether this, that, or the other device will be most useful in realizing this purpose is a subsidiary matter. The fundamental thing is that the process of admitting all men to a share in all the goods of life, as thus explained, is not,

as it appeared to Treitschke, a choice between King Mob and an aristocracy with power to dictate to a majority. Human interests themselves are a progressive hierarchy. Explain it how we will in philosophical theory, the higher in men is in constant campaign for supremacy over the lower. Few scientific generalizations have a wider basis of inductive proof than this. Civilization is a cumulative exhibit of the persistent forereaching of humanity for better things, after the more immediately necessary things have been secured. It is a very superficial interpretation of history to construe progress in the higher ranges of human achievement, as Treitschke does, as a gift which foreordained governors of the masses have handed down to the masses, and consequently a revelation that humanity can lead no higher life unless it perpetuates a dictating class. The higher achievements of men are not the product of an arbitrary type of human institutions. They are the realization of typical human interests, working hitherto mostly through arbitrary social institutions, but relatively eternal, while the institutions are relatively accidental and transitory. Human beings, not merely privileged castes, want all the goods realizable in life. Human beings have the latent capacity to learn discrimination among goods, and in the course of time to give merited preference to those that deserve the higher place. If Americans were ever in doubt of this, our public and private educational system should be more than enough to banish the doubt. Our comparatively young civilization has developed a system of schools which is more astonishing than our economic achievements. These people who rank in the opinion of Europeans as greedy materialists, have not only cheerfully but enthusiastically taxed themselves, and some of them doubly, to build and operate public schools from the lowest to the highest grades, and parallel denominational schools, which, considering the youth of our institutions in general, compare favorably with the cultural institutions of any country in the world. And this is the point—we have done it without the help of a governing caste. In short, with all the faults of democracy up to date,

there is reliable scientific sanction for the democractic faith: Give humanity a chance, and humanity will demand for itself all the goods attainable by humanity, and these goods will be arranged in a juster hierarchy by free humanity than by any conceivable dictatorship by a part of humanity over the whole.

Treitschke's discussion does not follow a progressive order from one position to another in a series of logical dependence, and it would be impossible to rearrange the essay so that its different parts would fall into such dependence. It is rather a number of attacks from different angles of approach. They all aim to halt the march of events toward the ideal of admitting increasing proportions of Germans "to a share in all the goods of civilization." The strategy of this obstructive campaign is a variation of the effort to show that maintenance of the traditional social structure is vital to preservation of civilization in general. Although we are at a disadvantage in taking up considerations in turn which merely reassert this underlying contention in different terms, following the writer's own order is the most convenient alternative.

We come, then, next, to a symptom of transition which we have already referred to in another connection, viz., discrimination of relations which appeal as facts equally to men on the traditional and on the innovating side of the situation, but interpretation of the facts as supports of the stationary and the progressive conception respectively. So far as Treitschke could see, the issue presented by the *Verein* reduced to a choice between aristocracy and mobocracy, or, as he viewed it, social control by classes that produce and guard the higher goods of civilization versus classes whose interests are barbaric. The real issue which is the generic social problem of the democratic period, especially since the French Revolution, is between an aristocracy of structure and an aristocracy of function. The one is rude, and naïve, and elementary, and provisional. The other is mature, and reasonable, and developed, and dependable. The aristocrat by institutional foreordination may be a stupid and dangerous brute. The aristocrat by vir-



tue of human service is to that extent a tested agent of the social process and deserving of prestige among his fellows in the degree of the importance of his service in the whole social scheme. Treitschke had not gone beyond the assumption that traditional status must be relied upon as assurance of the social functions. The democratic faith is that discharge of the social functions must be relied upon to earn such status and prestige as are henceforth to be tolerated. Treitschke insisted that social merit must be imputed to a structural aristocracy, and social faith must be reposed in it. Democracy raises the opposite demand that services alone shall insure social prestige. It is the difference between imputed righteousness and essential righteousness.

We Americans have invented a political aristocracy which is an intermediate term between the aristocracy of status and the aristocracy of function, viz., the aristocracy of political pull. This is an institution which has all the defects except that of permanence, which have been brought home to the old régime, and it affords no assurance that it will display the merits attributed to it by democratic optimism. Office holding by people without qualifications for office, but because they have performed service for a party, was a phenomenon with which Treitschke was not enough acquainted to be able to use this by-product of democracy as an effective contrast with the services of an aristocratic bureaucracy. As between the two types of political institution, it is by no means certain that our American type of civil service is to be preferred to the older class monopoly of civic functions. The latter certainly did develop certain ideals of efficiency which are not strikingly in evidence in our American system. Our last word about the system, however, the ground on which we may defend it against Treitschke's type of aristocracy, is that it is an institution in the making, that as we have it, little may be said in its favor except that it is a necessary intermediate condition between a statical régime which less fully insures satisfactory discharge of social functions and a genuinely functional régime.

The particular fact which Treitschke here calls up is the falsity of the proletarian assumption that manual workers are the only workers. He is clear-cut in his expression of the contrary, but he halts there with the implied conclusion: Therefore the classes which have the opportunity to do the most work must have the honors and emoluments and powers that belong with the work, whether they do it or not; instead of going on to the functional principle, viz., that doing the work must be the condition of receiving credit for the work—function before reward.

The passage in which the *non sequitur* comes out most clearly is the following:

If we would judge these necessary antitheses without passion, we must first consider that it is after all merely a theoretical abstraction to place laborers and the higher classes in antithesis with each other, as two separate worlds. Socialism fights no objection of its opponents more vehemently than the assertion that *we are all laborers*. The reason is plain. Sometimes this trivial expression, say, in the mouth of a candidate for the Reichstag, serves merely as a cheap means of currying popular favor. Yet it correctly characterizes modern society, and strikes at the heart of the theory of class hatred. More relentlessly than ever before must every muscle of society be employed in labor. No one among us works harder than the German Kaiser, for the duties of his high office follow him step by step even into the gaiety of court celebrations. In this tremendous operation of labor countless intermediate members have been developed, which constitute an unbroken series, from the heights to the depths of society, and modify the antithesis of class conceptions. Who could designate the point in German society today where the so-called material and intellectual callings divide? Who can designate this point accurately, even among the employees of a great factory?

Classes in the legal sense [estates] have long since ceased to exist, and between the free social groups which still exist, and can never wholly disappear, there occurs an eternal coming and going. New forces rise, effete ones fall. Look at the family trees of families of the higher classes selected at will, and it is plain that the socialists deny the facts. It is hard to maintain the position won by ancestors, and it is easy, by fault or misfortune, "to fall out of the caste." Sharing in the highest goods of civilization depends, moreover, by no means so exclusively upon the possession of material goods as socialism asserts. The sons of the cultured middle classes are undoubtedly better educated and with more human standards than the spoiled children of the rich. So long as

theology was still in accord with the thought of the time, the narrow walls of the German parsonage were the classical soil [*sic!*] of good training of children. Countless is the number of important men whose cradle was in these modest homes, and if we retain courage to assert the wholesome severity of our common schools against all attacks of socialistic undiscipline, it will turn out presently, and in the future still oftener than in the past, that gifted pupils will be put in a position by this modest and thorough school equipment, to rise above the average culture and to win their way in the freedom of methodical knowledge.

If we should strike out one or two touches, here and there in the passage, like the use of the term "socialistic" as an epithet of reproach, there would be nothing in the passage itself to indicate the use to which the author intended to put it as an argument. In his mind the proper inference is: Therefore, hold fast to all the safeguards of aristocratic privilege which are left. To the man who has begun to judge functionally instead of traditionally, the equally evident implication is: Therefore, abolish as completely as possible all arbitrary devices which tend to perpetuate the opportunity of members of one class to collect rewards for service not performed, and to limit the certainty that other classes will be able to enjoy the equivalent of services actually rendered. The program of the *Verein* did not contain any premature specifications of persons to whom this generalization would apply. It called for investigation of German conditions, in order to discover where and to what extent this inequality of distribution existed, and it proposed thereupon to carry the investigation farther into ways and means of reducing the inequality to a nearer approach to justice.

Again Treitschke has his eye on another vital principle in society, when he insists that the socialistic agitation has weakened the sense of the necessity of labor in the masses.

As we read his different homilies on this theme, we feel their untimeliness, and their tactlessness, and their disproportion, yet it would be a mistake on this account to disregard the serious reality which he had in mind. When the belated sections of society are in a state of embittered class consciousness, it is a poor time for

the classes against whom they feel resentment to attempt to improve matters by talking down to the agitated about their duty to work more faithfully. This duty may have been disregarded in all sorts of ways, but the classes against whom the grievance is felt must go a long way toward showing that the charges are unfounded, before it will be wise or expedient for them to assume the rôle of preachers of the obligation of labor. In terms of American conditions now, rather than of German conditions a generation ago, it is beyond human wisdom to declare whether exploitation or sabotage is at this moment the greater social menace or the more difficult and imminent social problem. We may be sure that there will never be stable social peace nor the highest prosperity, either material or moral, until every laborer does his work for all it is worth, whether in the lower ranks or the higher. There is no doubt, for instance, that the policy of scamping work is a considerable factor in the "high cost of living."

Possibly sabotage, in its deliberate and its unconscious forms, is a heavier burden on prosperity than all the forms of parasitism in the economically superior classes. Whether this is true or not, and it is beyond conclusive demonstration one way or the other, it is reasonably certain that the class which has the economic advantage must set the example of conspicuous fairness, and must make it convincing to the backward classes, before the elimination of scamping can make much progress. Manual laborers and the wage-earning classes in general have no such intellectual and moral advantage over the propertied classes that they can be expected to put more magnanimity into their work than they can discover in their employers. It does not help the matter, but rather adds insult to supposed injury, if employers who are at odds with their help are philanthropists in other relations, with means which are in dispute between the help and themselves. The corporation must be conspicuously fair in all its dealings with its employees before it can expect to exert an influence on its employees which will tend to save the economic and social waste of sabotage. This

spirit of fairness must go beyond all the charitable coddlings of employees. It must show itself in taking them into the confidence of the management, in a much more democratic way than many employers believe possible, and in encouraging their self-respect by treating them as though they were entitled to respect as human beings, not merely to the share of the maintenance fund that is necessary to keep them going as workers. This consideration applies to a considerable fraction of Treitschke's argument, and he seems to ignore it most blissfully.

It certainly must have aggravated every trade unionist to whom the words were reported to hear such a passage as this:

The dogma of the exploitation of man by man roughly rends in pieces the complex unity of society. Strong peoples have always lived in the belief that the first commandment of folk-thrift is: *labor! much, very much, and well!* Only in the second rank came the question about the distribution of the fruits of the common labor. Shall this fine old principle be forgotten today, while aversion to labor and relaxation of discipline are on the increase in the lower classes? Before we talk to the masses about violation of their human dignity, we should calmly say to them: First show yourselves men! Labor, in order that the total resources may increase! And if state and society apply a part of the total product of labor to build laboratories for the explorers of nature, or academies for the artists, be certain that this application will bear fruit for you also. Such fruits are, to be sure, not so immediately enticing as the showers of gold from the state of which Lassalle talked, yet they compare favorably with the fantasies of the socialists through the trivial circumstance that they are real!

The diabolical fatuity of such assertions is in the fact that they are truth out of place. It is easy to imagine that if the Archangel Michael appeared in the world today, his message to wage-earners would be along these lines: More conscientious labor! Be sure you give a hundred cents' worth of work for a dollar's wage before you accuse the wage system or the employer of misusing the wage system. And the Archangel would be a more timely minister of grace with such a message than when he slew the dragon. But what sermon would he preach when he entered Congress, and state and municipal legislatures, and boards of trade, and directors'



rooms? He would not be the old dragon-slayer if he did not wither men of financial and political power with the shame of their pettiness in loving power more than righteousness, and parade of patronage more than justice, and the arrogance of their legal rights more than magnanimity in leading the testing of legal rights, to see whether they tend more to increase or decrease of arbitrary distinctions between partners in human tasks. It is certainly to laugh when an attorney of *one of the parties in interest* takes it upon himself to pose as the Archangel Michael of the labor conflict, and to pronounce judgment upon the other party in terms of the self-righteousness of his clients. But this has been a large part of the inwardness of the class struggle in all civilized countries since the industrial revolution. Each party in interest has been trying to sit in judgment over the other, instead of trying to establish some sort of social tribunal which would actually be dispassionate toward each *ex parte* claim. We may go farther than this, and say that in comparison the classes with economic and political power show themselves more pusillanimous and more ungenerous in obstructing a program like that of the *Verein* than the labor classes do in any of their obstructive programs. The academic and professional classes are at bottom more in sympathy with economic and political tradition than they are with anything that would be subversive of essential economic or political justice. Their judgment would lean toward conservatism rather than toward a really destructive radicalism, if such an alternative actually came to the issue. The conservative classes certainly have no occasion to fear that their cause would be betrayed by partisan prejudice if it were admitted to examination by the quasi-academic elements in society. The proletariat has the more plausible reason for such fear. The longer the influential classes oppose thorough judicial examination of the bases and structure of our economic and moral institutions the stronger will be the *prima facie* case against them.

We have another illustration of the sophistical use of the ambiguous middle term in another form of Treitschke's talking down to the labor class in elaboration of the text, "*Labor is an end*

in itself." The conclusion which Treitschke tries to enforce by means of this edifying dictum is precisely Chancellor Day's doctrine, "The rich should always apply the Golden Rule, and the poor trust in God and not complain." But suppose it turns out that the rich are not applying the Golden Rule, and the poor discover that they wouldn't be trusting in God unless they did complain. What then? "Why," says Treitschke, "the alternative is: Remember that labor is an end in itself." Suppose we take Treitschke at his word. What have we got? Why, we have got one of the most complicated problems in human experience, viz.: What is labor, and what kinds of labor are more evidently ends in themselves than others? For instance, is labor in the weave room of a cotton mill, at a killing rate of speed in tending too many looms, in an atmosphere that is murderous—is such labor as that more or less an end in itself than labor to bring to the notice of the nation that parents of future citizens are working in these conditions; or even later to win for one's self and one's comrades better conditions? The only pertinence of Treitschke's claim was the implication that every laborer in Germany should accept the particular type of labor which his lot in life had assigned to him, as "an end in itself" and let well enough alone. That is, labor which is accepted as a bar to labor to improve the type of labor is an end in itself! Compared with a fallacy that ends in such self-stultification, Nirvana is a doctrine of surpassing spiritual dignity. Such trifling is not argument. It is merely betrayal of the essential dishonesty of the obstructive mental attitude. Treitschke indulges in a long preachment on the theme: "All reputable labor is honorable." If he were a weak-minded man, he might be defended by the plea that he did not know the platitude was impertinent. He was by no means a weak-minded man, and he should therefore have known that it was hypocritical to confuse the issue by contending that reputable labor is reputable when the real problem was: How may labor that is not reputable be made more disreputable, and labor that is honorable be made more comfortable and efficient and remunerative?

Then Treitschke introduces a pseudo-pietistic passage which is an equally elementary logical fallacy, i.e., that poverty itself, rather than brave struggle to overcome the disadvantages of poverty, is the admirable condition; *ergo*, eternalize the poverty rather than stimulate the struggle. The same passage is unctuous with the implication that resignation rather than aspiration is the essence of Christian faith. Again, *ergo*, if the poor should succeed in improving their condition, there would be no more religion!

It is a relief to reach the passage in which Treitschke begins most positively to illustrate another general law of the psychology of transition, viz.: *In a period of transition everyone baptizes his doctrine with the name "progress."* We are certainly familiar with the phenomenon in American politics at this moment. In his own esteem, every politician in the United States today is progressive, from those who are progressing backward to those who are progressing headlong.

Moreover, in every period of transition (or to simplify the proposition we may confine it to periods of transition from worse to better conditions) the phenomena are always confused by much obstructive action on the part of men who are already in sympathy, but not in reasoning, on the side of all that is essential in the forward movement.

Treitschke's traditionalism voiced itself in very dogmatic assertions of the necessary permanence of factors in the existing German social order which were mere details. Having delivered himself of his unalterable opinions about these details, he passes to expression of his belief that:

There is going on in the state and society a mighty development, the growing realization of the idea of humanity, and this process goes on only in the course of severe struggles. State and society belong to the ethical world. They live according to moral laws, and these are distinguished from physical laws by the fact that they sway personal life, i.e., that they reach their realization not always and everywhere, but only partially and occasionally. . . . There is a natural conflict between the selfishness of different men. . . . The unbridled selfishness of individuals leads necessarily to class conflicts. . . . Society cannot automatically achieve an assured peace or a permanent order,

but it must come through the state, through the moral will of the totality, which is something quite different from the sum of the selfish individual wills, and is related to them as duty to desire, etc.

There is so much along this line in the rest of the essay that if one should stumble upon that part of the paper without having read the beginning, it would be a puzzle whether the writer was on the whole arguing with Schmoller or against him. In fact the two men evidently did not know, and it is impossible at this distance to find out how far they really were apart on concrete details. As is always the case in a social transition, the man on the traditional side distrusts the theories of the innovators, and fears the extremes to which they would be committed if they were able to go as far as extravagant interpretations of their reasonings would lead. Because of this dissent from abstractions and abhorrence of imaginable consequences, the traditionalist sets himself against programs which he might approve and promote if proposed on their own concrete merits, or upon theoretical grounds that more nearly resembled his own.

We have had in the United States a generation filled with instances under this general form in the matter of the tariff. People have called themselves and each other "protectionists" and "free traders," with occasional occurrence of the species "for revenue only." Analysis of the debates, public and private, on this subject, since the first Morrill bill, would show the most heterogeneous consortings, under the same title, of people who believed in very different policies; and at the same time the most irrational fighting between people who adopted different party titles, but really wanted the same thing. Thus people were arguing for protection when they meant things varying from the 10 to 20 per cent necessary to give an "infant industry" a market while it was learning to stand on its own feet, up to the rate which those protectionists wanted who would prefer to exclude foreign goods altogether. On the other hand, as was illustrated by the Wilson bill, people called themselves free traders when what they wanted was tariff schedules ranging from 40 per cent to over 100 per cent at a time when an

average rate of 20 per cent was regarded in Europe as high protection. Men who held these inconsistent views almost invariably represented their opponents as holding views so extreme that it certainly would have been the height of folly to follow them. The judicial method of dealing with the tariff has consequently been conspicuous by its absence to the present time, and is likely to be postponed indefinitely.

The particular bugaboo which throughout the essay Treitschke has suspected in Schmoller's program is the lineal progeny of the monster "equality" which the theory is supposed to harbor. It is extremely doubtful whether Schmoller really believed in an equality in actual practice different from that which Treitschke would approve, or at any rate different enough to be worth arguing about from the American point of view. They certainly differed about an abstract theory of distribution which was unnecessarily complicated with the antecedent theory of equality or non-equality. We might consider this difference to better purpose in connection with Treitschke's essay on the theory of distribution. Meanwhile we may quote Treitschke's own expression of what he thinks he has established in the present essay. It is his closing paragraph:

The civic society of a socialized folk is a natural aristocracy; it can and should assure the highest functions and enjoyments of civilization to a minority only, yet it allows everyone without exception to rise into the ranks of this minority. In the present century, Germany's cultured classes have never entirely forgotten their duties toward the lower classes, least of all in the much abused days of the emancipating social legislation of the North German Confederation. In the future also they will recognize these duties. They reject the illusion, however, that in the moral world there can be anything like a gift, or that any social reform can give to the laborers what a lying agitation threatens to destroy—the sense of the honor of labor. While bloody misdeeds tell of the demoralization of the masses, while demagogues preach on the streets the right not to work, and play with the works of centuries as with houses of cards, we men of culture will loyally guard the inheritance from our fathers, and we will fearlessly profess the proud old motto of German citizenship which the American Longfellow once translated from the roofs and towers of Nuremberg: "*The nobility of labor, the long pedigree of toil!*"



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE ATTEMPT (1860-80) TO RECONSTRUCT ECONOMIC THEORY ON A SOCIOLOGICAL BASIS

This chapter is concerned first and foremost with Albert Schäffle.<sup>1</sup> We come then to the man whom we have mentioned in other connections, but who should be remembered by sociologists chiefly as one of the first to propose to Germans a scheme that purported to be a comprehensive sociology in the later sense of the term.<sup>2</sup>

Schäffle was a pathetic figure in modern history. It is certain that his political enemies accused him of the whole gamut of political crimes, from incompetence to treason. The most direct evidence available as to the reasons for his reputation and his ostracism is in the *Autobiography*, and in the Preface to *Das gesellschaftliche System*, 3d ed. (1873), pp. vi-xxi. It is not certain that one who is unacquainted with Austrian politics of the period can read even this evidence correctly. As nearly as it can be interpreted from this distance, the substance of the political issue which cost Schäffle

<sup>1</sup>The place of this man in economic and sociological development would be enigmatical if he had not furnished partial explanation in his autobiography, entitled *Aus meinem Leben*. 2 vols. For our purposes it is enough to cite from the long list of Schäffle's publications only the following (*op. cit.*, II, 244-47):

1. *Die Nationalökonomie, oder allgemeine Wirtschaftslehre*, pp. xvi+306. 1861.

2. *Über die ethische Seite der nationalökonomischen Lehre vom Werte*, pp. 37. 1862.

3. *Das gesellschaftliche System der menschlichen Wirtschaft*, pp. xxxi+584.

With a different title, 1st ed., 1861; 2d ed., 1867; 3d ed., 1873. Pp. xxxviii+296 and 604.

4. *Bau und Leben des socialen Körpers*. Encyklopädischer Entwurf einer realen Anatomie, Physiologie und Psychologie der menschlichen Gesellschaft, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Volkswirtschaft als socialen Stoffwechsel, 1875, Vol. I, pp. xxiv+850; 1878, Vol. II, pp. viii+498; 1881-82, Vol. III, pp. xv+575, Vol. IV, pp. viii+533. Second ed., 2 vols., 1896.

<sup>2</sup>We shall repeat presently that we do not undertake to settle the question of priority between Schäffle and Lilienfeld.

his position as Austrian *Handelsminister*, and simultaneously his good repute among economists, was, in a word, *closer v. laxer* federation of the Hapsburg state—*consolidation v. particularism*. Schäffle passionately defended his support of one of these alternatives against unscrupulous misrepresentation. His opponents were the stronger party, and he was sacrificed. He presently left Austria, and in his declining years his home was in Stuttgart.<sup>1</sup>

The first sure factor in the formula of Schäffle's personal equation would have to be his unequivocal rejection of the classical economic theory as an interpretation of the economic elements in human life. It seems to be true, on the other hand, that he had an eclectic hospitality for each of the proposed variants of classical theory. That is, he was open to conviction from many quarters that something is present in economic activities in excess of the depersonalized activity of non-moral forces presupposed by the successors of Ricardo. He was not only tolerant of the historical, the ethical and the psychological movements in economic theory, but he was even recognized by some of the leaders in each of these movements as in part a co-worker in developing their respective methods. Thus Philippovich<sup>2</sup> credits Schäffle with having been, as early as 1861, among the energetic opponents of the idea that *economic selfishness is the sole key to economic phenomena*. Philippovich says:

These ideas were energetically represented by Schäffle, by whom, as by no other economist, full value was given to the ideas of the time respecting the philosophy of law, and the relation of the state to economic phenomena.

<sup>1</sup> Not long before his death in 1903 I exchanged several letters with him on the subject, broached by himself, of an American translation of his *Bau und Leben*. There was an undertone of disappointment and bitterness in his letters which appealed strongly to my sympathy. I have never succeeded in getting a convincing picture of Schäffle as a personality, however. I am accordingly obliged to speak of him simply as a sociological theorist.

<sup>2</sup> In the second of the two testimonial volumes to Schmoller, 1908, under the title "Die Eindringung der socialpolitischen Ideen in die Literatur." The article is translated under the title "The Infusion of Socio-Political Ideas into the Literature of German Economics," *American Journal of Sociology*, XVIII (1912), 145-99. It is well worth reading as an economist's version of the same drive toward objectivity which we are observing.

He calls attention to the fact that those who, in the immediate past, have earned the most prestige in developing economic theory, have been in part eminent, or at least respected representatives of moral and legal philosophy, in part historians.<sup>1</sup>

Without going into further particulars of these general relationships, we may get at the heart of the matter in Schäffle's case by recognizing the central fact that the inconclusiveness of the economic theory in which he had been schooled drove him, through attempts to reconstruct economic theory proper, into a venture in social interpretation on a more comprehensive scale. This latter attempt proved to be one of the notable beginnings of sociology in the general sense in which it was later developed in the United States.

In order to arrive at the most favorable point from which to appreciate Schäffle's sociology, viz., by viewing it as a natural child of political economy, we must make our approach through his chief economic work, *The Societary System of Human Thrift*. The book is chiefly in point for us now as an index of developing dissatisfaction with the prevailing method in economic theory. As it affected Schäffle, the dissatisfaction passed into proposal of an *alternative method*, i.e., a more objective and therefore more conclusive way of stating and explaining economic phenomena. We cannot precisely trace the mental processes through which the primarily economic problem and the primarily societary problem reacted upon each other in Schäffle's mind so as to revolutionize his views of the necessary treatment of each. All that is sure in this connection is that he began as other economists had begun—by trying to explain economic phenomena as though they might be interpreted solely by themselves. He ended by teaching that we must first get an insight into the interconnections of human phenomena in general before we can have the standing ground from which to explain those phases of human phenomena which we label "economic."

<sup>1</sup> Philippovich refers to Schäffle's monograph, *Mensch und Gut in der Volkswirtschaft*. *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift* (1861), 4 Heft, p. 232.

One cannot give an idea of Schäffle's memorable economic essay better than by supposing that a member of the present economic staff in the University of Chicago today for the first time stumbled upon the volume, without having heard before anything about the book or its author. His most probable reaction, after turning the leaves enough to get a general impression of the author's program, would be voiced in some sort of exclamation of surprise. He might say: "Why! Here is a man in 1861-73 trying to do just what we are trying to do now in our department. Instead of revamping conventional dogmas about economic relations, he has started out to do just what we are trying to do, viz., first get a reliable account of just how economic operations fit into one another. He is trying to begin just where we are trying to begin—not with theory but with a conspectus of the actual organization which economic interests have created, and an account of how this economic organization works."

This is a just description, so far as it goes, of Schäffle's procedure.

Now it would be an ignorant blunder to say that Schäffle was the first economist to make such an attempt. Most of the cameralists had done precisely this, after a fashion. Even the most abstract of the classical school, not to emphasize Adam Smith himself, had wrought into their attempted interpretations more or less of this concrete description. We may say of Schäffle that in comparison with predecessors his plan of starting economic theory with analysis of economic organization was supported by more sophistication as to the *a priori* assumptions which he wanted to exclude from influence upon his analysis, and by more conscious purpose to carry through a technique of detecting actual relations of cause and effect among economic operations, as well as between these and all their determining conditions, than had been mobilized before.

It does not require much reading between the lines to detect also in this early economic essay indications of a notable shifting of attention from that impersonal center "wealth," which had been the focus of prevailing economic theory, to the concrete

human reality. The opening paragraph of the book *Grundlegung*, under the special title "The Foundation-Laying of National Economy," reads as follows:

The personal self-preservation and self-development of human beings, i.e., their conscious moral life, is very comprehensively dependent upon acquisition and use of such external goods as are not furnished gratuitously by nature. Either universally, or at all events for particular members of human society, many goods are accessible only in consequence of human co-operation, i.e., only mediately and, in comparison with human want, in a limited, i.e., insufficient, degree.

This limited availability of means of satisfaction or use is the occasion of a peculiar regimen of production and of use. The aim of the same is: with a minimum of personal sacrifice to secure a maximum of realization of human purposes; in other words, at minimum cost to obtain a maximum of utility, and thus to insure the amplest possible provision for *the entire personal life*.

As compared with the utterances of the classical economists, this is a new and strange idiom. It shifts the emphasis from things to people. Goods are not referred to as ends, but as means. The whole program necessary for co-operating with nature in supplying human wants is treated not as something which can be expressed in terms of wealth, as a least common denominator. It is seen rather as a strictly instrumental program. Its ultimate value is located in the promotion it can assure to the moral achievements of men. Schäffle continues (p. 2):

As a matter of experience, the essence and germ of all thrift turns out to be the controlling of production and the appropriating of limitedly accessible external means of satisfying wants, so as to assure a maximum of net utility, for the purposes of maximum provision for the *entire personal life*. [Italics are the author's.] The proper subject-matter for economic theory is the process by which *society* [*sic*] carries out above purpose.

A few lines later, Schäffle adds:

The aim of all thrift, viz., *maximum net utility*, does not mean, however, *maximum wealth*, but maximum abundance of all-sided ethico-personal development and culture of individuals and of the *Volk*, through economic production and consumption of external goods. The use of money is merely mediary in the process through which society achieves this end.



A little later this moral, or social, viewpoint is indicated still more explicitly in this way:

A broad survey of the real world shows us a gradual transition from blindly necessary action and reaction of natural forces to progressively purposeful operation. Moral activity is the highest observable summit in experience, in the course of this creative-advance<sup>1</sup> into unfolding of purposeful, useful effort. But a realm of self-conscious and self-imposed purposefulness, a realm of the phenomena of real spirit, discloses itself through socialization within nature.

In comment upon this paragraph Schäffle adds:

What science cannot demonstrate, faith may gladly assume, viz., that the entire mechanism of unconsciously functioning nature is destined ultimately to serve the realization of that which is the only worthful moral good, namely the social<sup>2</sup> [*sittlich*]; that through the extension of moralization matter is destined to pass more and more into spiritualization, into moral organization. The national economist at least is everywhere thrust on toward such belief. More and more he sees material transmuted into goods; more and more blind workings of nature into socially useful labor and socially useful endowment; more and more impersonal and purposeless existence into personal means and personal attainment [*Bildung*].

At this point Schäffle tries to make his thought plainer by subscribing to a passage in Lotze:

In this connection I follow Lotze the more readily since his observations, entirely detached from all partisanship, so far as economic theory is concerned, are especially convincing in their application to national-economy. He speaks somewhat as follows: "It is a widely prevalent materialistic conception that our inner life, like the constant change of the external, is only a whirl of movements which the countless atoms of our nervous system maintain by means of incessant reactions. We have not merely given up the idea of natural psychic personalities, but we have turned the possibility of a personal existence of any sort into the obscurest riddle. Imprisoned within the great perpetual motion machine which we call nature is this minor mechanism of the human spirit. It is more artificial than any other, since it feels its own impulsions, and wonders over the toys of the other. But at last its components vanish, and the jest and earnest, the love and the hate which have actuated this strange being are

<sup>1</sup> Has Bergson added anything?

<sup>2</sup> I venture the rendering as carrying the idea in the context.

no more. All these latter consequences are drawn, now with glee now with despair. But they are not *everywhere* drawn. Perhaps it will appear that the totality of all the mechanism of nature is far from constituting an antithesis with the true tasks of the spiritual life. It may turn out to be rather a necessary *subservient* member in the correlation of that great whole, of which the changing temper of the *Zeitgeist* exposes to the human mind only now the one aspect and now the other.

In this *introduction to the science of political economy*, be it noted, Schäffle continues for about fifteen (83-98) pages, quite in the manner of Lotze, the psychologist and moral philosopher, to justify consideration of the psychic peculiarities of human beings as fundamental in political economy, not less than in every other valid interpretation of human experience.

Returning to Schäffle's introductory section (p. 4), we find the following:

That consciously purposeful or morally useful effort which emerges in the realm of individual and of group socialization has accordingly as its bearers and as its goals, richly articulated moral organisms, i.e., particular persons and whole communities of persons. The purposeful efforts in this realm are accordingly to be carried out as a deliberate system of useful performance. Moreover, in the graded progressiveness of the purposefulness of the phenomena of the real world, it is finally the realm of the useful application of morally personal powers and goods, in which, in accordance with nature, consciously purposeful control of many useful movements and manifestations of energy in the direction of the highest net utility will appear. This is the field of *economics*. . . . National Economy has to do only with control of the morally useful life of the *societary organism*.

To be sure, as a matter of experience, economy in the present sense is inevitable, and it actually puts in an appearance, only for those socially personal useful operations and manifestations of force for which, in presence of the personal *societary* purpose, the means of realization are insufficiently at command. In other words *lack* is the occasion for economy.

Then Schäffle analyzes at some length the phenomena of want (*Bedürfnis*) on the one hand, and of lack (*Mangel*) on the other, as the fundamental conditions which account for conscious human action in general, and action aimed at control of material goods

in particular (pp. 4-6). Thereupon he further develops his view of socialization (*Gesittung*) "as a process of the production and consumption of external goods" (p. 6). The emphasis, however, is always on the fact that production and consumption of material goods are not a vicious circle, beginning and ending with material goods, but that they are processes intermediate in the ultimate process of realizing *personal* potencies. Thus he says (p. 9): "The actor in the economically controlled artificial processes is always a *given person*, with the entire range of his moral life, *his entire objective demand upon life*" (*sic*). And Schäffle expands this proposition in this note (p. 9): "True economy then is directed, as the vulgar conception also understands it, at the most effective provision for the *totality* of personal life, not merely at maximum satisfaction of particular wants."

These indications are sufficient clues to the sort of thesis in economic theory for which Schäffle spoke. His conception of economic processes visualized them as not merely processes beginning and ending with physical matter. He saw them as processes impelled and controlled and utilized by psycho-physical agents in the interest of complete expression of their psycho-physical interests. His general conception of economic processes may be expressed in terms of a single portion of the economic mechanism in this way: A railroad is not merely a means of moving freight and passengers. A railroad is a physical device for serving all the physico-spiritual interests of physico-spiritual persons, in so far as the processes of land-transportation can contribute to that result. Accordingly his conception of economic theory as a whole was of the entire system of agencies devised by men for control of external goods, functioning not with control of external goods as the ultimate aim, but with the destination of making this control of economic goods as useful as possible in realizing the personal capacities of people.

This conception varied only in detail from the essential idea, not merely of such men as Knies, Wagner, Schmoller, and Menger,

but of a multitude of men whose thinking followed more closely the Ricardian variation of Adam Smith's method. Schäffle merely varied the ethical emphasis, and followed this variation by a correspondingly altered treatment of economic phenomena.

It is not necessary for our purpose to follow Schäffle farther into his version of economic theory. It is enough to point out that if he had never set his hand to any piece of scientific work which bore any other label than economics, the things which he emphasized would have impelled someone sooner or later to attempt just what he attempted, viz., to show that economic phenomena are something more than economic phenomena, i.e., to *expand surveys of men engaged in the production and consumption of wealth, into surveys of men carrying on the whole complex of purposeful activities into which they are urged by the entire range of their wants.*<sup>1</sup>

Review of the positions of Menger and Schäffle, as each has been indicated thus far, might easily suggest this query: Why did they go so far in analysis of social phenomena, without going still farther, i.e., to a point at which Schäffle might have done something more objective and less equivocal than his attempt to plot human activities under the figure of biological analogies?

It may be a partial explanation that the Austrian economists were beguiled by their very intelligence into putting their strength upon the less revealing of two alternative clues to further knowledge of human phenomena. That is, they arrived, first, at the highly abstract category "utility" as their symbol for everything toward which conscious human action (and unconscious, for that matter) is directed. Thereupon two principal ways were open to them, viz.: first, the one which they did not choose, but which remained for another tendency (Ratzenhofer, also an Austrian) to develop twenty years later; i.e., an attempt to put into that highly abstract concept "utility" the concrete content which had constituted the

<sup>1</sup> Schäffle did this in his work, originally in four volumes, entitled *Bau und Leben des sozialen Körpers*. For Table of Contents see Small, *General Sociology*, pp. 157-79. Cf. with Spencer, *ibid.*, pp. 109-56.

substantial aim of as many different types of purpose-groups as could be identified. This would have been an attempt to answer more fully the question: *Utility for what?* It must have led directly to the functional method of correlating human phenomena. Second, the way which Schäffle actually did take, of attempting to exhibit primarily the correlations of social phenomena, as such, in the abstract, instead of trying to exhibit, less artificially, social phenomena as they have been organized into concrete situations, in the course of trying to realize specific objective purposes, or "utilities." In Schäffle's hands this second program proved to reach less objective results than were reached later; first, because it directed attention primarily to means (organization, structure) rather than to ends (wants, purposes, valuations, interests), the drive to realize which created and actuated the structures; second, and perhaps partly in consequence of the former choice, it was more easily satisfied with analogy (biological) in its method of stating means, than it probably would have been if it had fixed its attention directly upon *persons actuated by literal purposes, and intent upon devising means to gain them.* For a long time there was such fascination about comparing social machinery and output with physiological machinery and output. By it men capable of doing better work were held back from progress toward deeper insight into real human methods of settling upon purposes and of devising means for gaining them. Thus the newly empowered desire for objectivity was misguided into a merely varied type of subjectivity. Schäffle and his kind had arrived at some promising insights, but for a long time they permitted these insights to become beclouded under a mist of far-fetched analogies.

Another book should be mentioned as notable in itself, and as an index of the general thought movement which we have been describing, viz., Lilienfeld, *Gedanken über die Socialwissenschaft der Zukunft*. It was published originally in Russian. The five volumes appeared respectively in 1872, 1875, 1877, 1879, 1881. The German translation used by the present writer seems to have



been published at Mitau almost simultaneously with the original. An edition with a German publisher's imprint appeared in 1901.

In the Preface to the first volume of the first edition of *Bau und Leben* Schäffle says: "I have systematically followed out the 'real analogies' cited by Comte, Littré, Spencer, and recently in a peculiarly stimulating way by Paul von Lilienfeld." In a note Schäffle adds: "According to John Stuart Mill, Comte's disciple Littré was the first to call attention to the real analogy between public economy and organic metabolism [*Stoffwechsel*]. Cf. Mill's essay on Comte." In another passage of the same Preface, Schäffle testifies that he did not see the earlier sheets of Spencer's *Descriptive Sociology* until he had begun to print his first volume.

Apparently Lilienfeld and Schäffle were moved by some common stimulus, or by different stimuli urging in a common direction. Although the former published somewhat in advance of the latter, and probably exerted some influence upon details in *Bau und Leben*, the latter work does not contain visible traces of debt to Lilienfeld.<sup>1</sup>

The respective titles of Lilienfeld's volumes are as follows:

(1) *Human Society as a Real Organism*, 1873; (2) *The Social Laws*, 1875; (3) *Social Psychophysics*, 1877; (4) *Social Physiology*, 1879; (5) *Religion Considered from the Standpoint of Positive [real-genetische] Social Science, or: Attempt at a Natural Theology*, 1881.

Whether further search into Lilienfeld's antecedents would disclose that he is entitled to more of the credit for the particular impulse of which American sociologists became aware chiefly through Schäffle cannot now be ascertained. Enough that, while apparently detached from the main current of European tendency in social science, he was typical of one of its most energetic impulses. The fact that it was an impulse which spent its strength without arriving at the results anticipated by its promoters, does not neutralize its importance. It was a tendency which drove men to

<sup>1</sup> I may add that I did not get hold of Lilienfeld's book until some years after I had made my own digest of Schäffle. The earlier book then impressed me as a vague foreshadowing of the later one.

discovery of its futility and to further efforts to invent an adequate apparatus of discovery.

The Preface of Lilienfeld's first volume deserves a place with the documentary material of this survey. It is as follows:

Every day the unfruitfulness of the scholastico-dogmatical method of treating political and social questions, which still prevails not only in science but in the daily press, becomes more evident and more striking. In the realm of natural science the untenability of this method has been recognized for centuries, and it was unanswerably shown up by the great English philosopher, Bacon, at the close of the sixteenth century. Conviction of the equal untenability, yes, harmfulness of this method in the realm of social science has moved the author to devote himself to this work.

The task which the author has undertaken, the thesis which he has attempted to prove, may be formulated in this way; *Like natural organisms, human society is a real being [ein reales Wesen], it is nothing more than a continuation of nature, it is merely a higher expression of the same forces which are at the basis of all natural phenomena.* And while the author has not hesitated, in the pursuit of his undertaking, to apply the latest results of natural science, especially of biology and anthropology, to social science, and to follow them out to their extremest consequences, he has done so in the belief that he has not thereby given a new impulse to the superficial materialistic conception of the world; but that on the contrary he has performed a special service for the idealistic conception. For through association of social life with the development of the natural forces that region comes into prominence which solely and alone can serve as point of unification for those two views, hitherto hostile and irreconcilable, viz., the materialistic and the spiritualistic.

No doubt it will be some time before the protagonists of dogmatic social science, with their inflexible scholastic forms and conceptions, will learn to regard the social organism as a real being. Nothing is more difficult than to abandon once trodden ways, especially in the intellectual realm; and it is the harder the more one-sided and false and perverse the previous habit. Yet sooner or later truth will and must break through. Just as the application of the empirical method has borne splendid fruit in the realm of natural science, to the benefit of mankind and to the promotion of higher civilization; so application of the same method, let us hope in the near future, will bear equally splendid fruits and will not less promote the progress of the human race.

The work now submitted to the judgment of the reading public has been written with a purely scientific purpose. In this first part the social questions of the day are touched only in so far as they fall within the realm of general

scientific consideration, and in so far as light may be thrown upon them from the scientific standpoint. The author has attempted to hold himself as far as possible aloof from partisanship and the animus of the propagandist—those implacable enemies of all scientific investigation.

The principles set forth in this part will serve the author in the later portions as basis and point of departure for solution of those practico-social questions which so powerfully grip the sympathies and passions of the present generation.

If this work does not prove as useful as is hoped, if it does not help to extend the scope of social science and to give it firmer foundations, the reason must be in the inadequacy of the powers of the author and of the means at his disposal, not in fault of the method nor in the untenability of the principles upon which it rests, and upon which alone, in the author's deepest conviction, the entire structure of the social sciences can be durably erected.<sup>1</sup>

No more appropriate criticism of Schäffle in particular and of the method of biological analogy in general is available than Menger's, published in 1883. We insert a digest of the argument.<sup>2</sup>

Chapter I. "On the Analogy between Social Phenomena and Natural Organisms, the Limits of the Same, and the Resulting Methodological Viewpoint for Social Investigation."

1. *The theory of the analogy.*—Between natural organisms and numerous social structures, there exists, in respect both of their function and of their origin, a certain similarity.

We may observe in the natural organisms an almost measureless complication of details and especially a multiplicity of their parts [i.e., of the particular organs]. Yet this multiplicity conduces to the maintenance, the development and the propagation of the organisms *as wholes*. In respect to this result,

<sup>1</sup> In 1857 C. Frantz published a small book of 344 pages with the title *Vorschule zur Physiologie der Staaten*. It is interesting as a sample of sporadic publications in Germany, including Austria, along through not merely the nineteenth, but also the eighteenth, century, each indicating certain insights which later became more penetrating and which stimulated development of the analogical type of sociological prospecting. The eleventh and last chapter of the book is entitled, "Von der Aufgabe und Methode der politischen Physiologie." The author describes the chapter in an alternative title as "Nachrede statt der Vorrede." In the opening paragraph he says: "After we have indicated in the foregoing chapters that civic bodies have, in fact, a peculiar nature, and after we have pointed out wherein this peculiar nature consists, and how it manifests itself, we must in conclusion speak of the science which has to investigate *diese Natur oder Physis der Staaten, d. h. die politische Physiologie.*"

<sup>2</sup> Menger (*Methode*), Book III, *The Organic Interpretation of Social Phenomena*, pp. 139 ff.

each part of the organism has its special function. If this function is disturbed there results a more or less intensive disturbance of the function of the entire organism; it may be of the other organisms in succession, in accordance with the intensity of the originally disturbed function. Conversely, a disturbance of the correlation of the organs into a higher whole in like fashion reacts upon the character and the function of the several organs. The normal function and development of the whole of an organism is of a sort determined by the development and function of its parts, the latter in turn by the combination of the parts into a higher whole, the normal function and development of each particular organ finally by that of the other organs.

We find something in many respects similar to this in the case of a multitude of social phenomena, particularly of economic phenomena. . . . It is evident that we have in these facts certain analogies between the character and function of the natural organisms on the one hand and the social combinations on the other.

This holds, for example, of the *origin* of many social phenomena. Under strict observation the natural organisms present, almost without exception, wonderful adaptation [*Zwoeckmässigkeit*] of all their parts with reference to the whole, an adaptation, moreover, which is not the outcome of human calculation but of a natural process. In like manner in the case of many social institutions, we may observe striking adaptation in respect to the whole of society, while under closer inspection these institutions *do not prove to be the outcome of an intention directed towards the purpose in question*, i.e., of an agreement between the members of the society, or in particular of positive legislation. These social formations, too, are rather (in a certain sense) "natural" products, i.e., unpremeditated outcomes of historical development. Think, for example, of the phenomenon of money, an institution which in so large measure serves the well being of society, yet among by far the most peoples, it did not come into being in consequence of a formal agreement to establish the same as a social institution. It was rather the unpremeditated product of historical development. Other examples are law, language, markets, communities, states, etc.

Since now there are these analogies between social phenomena and natural organisms in respect to their nature, their origin and their function, it is at once clear that this fact cannot remain without influence upon the methods of investigation in the field of the social sciences in general, and of economics in particular.

*Anatomy* is the theory of the forms of organisms and of the structure of their parts [the organs]. *Physiology* is the theoretical science which sets in order the phenomena of organisms and the functions of their parts [the organs]

in respect to the maintenance and development of the organisms in their totality. If now, state, society, the economic system, etc., are thought of as organisms, in particular as analogies of physical organisms, the thought is obvious that in the realm of these social phenomena it might be profitable to pursue types of investigation analogous with those which are appropriate in the case of organic nature. The above analogy leads to the idea of theoretical social science analogous with those which are the result of research in the physico-organic world, i.e., to an *Anatomy* and a *Physiology* of the social organisms, State, Society, Economy, etc.

We have thus presented the fundamental ideas of the theory of the analogy between social phenomena and natural organisms, an analogy which, as is well known, Plato and Aristotle had drawn in the sciences of the state. We have also indicated the two factors by which the theory is chiefly recognized in recent scientific literature. We do not mean that we have thus exhausted the particulars in which parallelisms between the two kinds of phenomena are striking. We think however we have in the foregoing presented the nucleus of the theory in the form and sense in which it is held by its most careful exponents.

2. *On the limits of the method.*—The great vogue which the foregoing ideas have had in the writings of all peoples on the social sciences is at all events striking proof that there is obvious similarity between the two types of phenomena in the respects indicated.

Nevertheless only obdurate prepossession could disregard a three-fold consideration:

*First, that only a portion of social phenomena manifest analogies with natural organisms.*

A large portion of social formations is not the outcome of a natural process, no matter what the sense in which we think of that process. It is rather the result of deliberation and agreement among men, oftentimes of positive legislation. Even social phenomena of this type exhibit usually adaptation of their parts in respect to the whole. This, however, is not the consequence of a natural, or "organic," process. It is rather the outcome of *human foresight, which makes a multitude of means tributary to its ends*. It is consequently out of the question to concede an "organic" character or origin to those social phenomena. If there is any analogy in their case, it is not with *organisms*, but with *mechanisms*.

*Second, that the analogy between social phenomena and the natural organisms is not complete; it does not embrace all the sides of the character of the respective phenomena.* It embraces rather only those aspects of similarity which were pointed out in the previous section, and even with respect to these it is unprecise.



This applies in the first place to the analogy which is supposed to exist between the two groups of phenomena in question with respect to the conditioning of the normal nature and functioning of the whole by the parts, and vice versa. The conception is prevalent among the representatives of this analogical tendency in social science, that the parts of a whole and the whole itself are reciprocally both cause and effect of each other. This conception is so vague, it is so inadequate to our laws of thought, that we shall not go far astray if we use it as telling evidence that our age sadly lacks profound insight in many respects into the nature of both natural and social phenomena. Accordingly the analogy which we are discussing is not one which rests upon full insight into the character of the phenomena here in question. It rests rather upon vague consciousness of a certain resemblance between the function of the natural organs and that of a part of the social combination. It is clear also that an analogy of this sort cannot be a sufficient basis for the profoundest theoretical comprehension of social phenomena.

This is true in a much higher degree of that analogy which is assumed between the *origins* of the two types of phenomena. The analogy has led to the most multifold theories of the "organic origin" of social phenomena. In this connection then the untenability of the analogy is actually evident.

The natural organisms are composed of elements which serve the whole in a thoroughly mechanical fashion. They are the outcome of purely causal processes, the mechanical play of natural forces. On the other hand, the so-called social organisms cannot, as such, be understood and interpreted as the product of purely mechanical reactions. They are rather the outcome of human endeavors, of the efforts of thinking, feeling, acting human beings. If then we are entitled to speak at all of an "organic origin" of social formations, or more exactly of a portion of such formations, this may refer solely to the circumstance that a portion of social phenomena are the outcome of the direction of the *common will* to their establishment (agreement, positive legislation, etc.), while another portion is the unpremeditated outcome of human efforts directed to the attainment of essentially *individual* purposes (i.e., the unintended resultants of these latter). In the first case the social phenomena arise through the exertion of the common will directed toward their establishment (they are the *intended* products of these latter), in the other case social phenomena arise without a common will directed to their establishment. They are the unintended outcome of individual endeavors to gain individual purposes. Only this hitherto inadequately recognized circumstance gave occasion for characterizing the origin of the last mentioned unintended social phenomena as "natural" or "organic." The so-called "organic" origin of a portion of social phenomena

manifests therefore essential differences from that process to which the natural organisms owe their origin. These differences are, moreover, *not* of the sort which may be observed between natural organisms. The difference in the respect above pointed out proves rather to be fundamental, such as the difference between mechanical force and human will, between products of mechanical energy on the one hand and of individual human ingenuity on the other.

Moreover, that portion of social combinations with reference to which the analogy with natural organisms may actually come into consideration, presents the analogy at best only in certain respects. And even in these particulars the likenesses are only of a kind which to some extent must be characterized as vague, and the rest must be pronounced highly superficial and inexact.

3. *On the methodological principles which follow from the incompleteness of the alleged analogies.*—If, as many social philosophers assume, the above discussed analogies were complete, if social formations were in very truth organisms, this circumstance would without doubt be of decisive significance for the methodology of the social sciences. In that case the methods of those natural sciences which are concerned with investigation of the organic world, of anatomy and physiology in particular, would then at the same time be the methods of social sciences in general and of economics in particular.

The circumstance, however, that the analogy exists only in the case of a portion of social phenomena, and even with them only in a partial and superficial way, excludes the hypothetical conclusion entirely. On the other hand the cognitive principles which follow from the situation thus analyzed are the following:

1. The so-called organic interpretation of social phenomena can be adequate to a portion only of the same, namely to those which we find to be *not* the outcome of agreement, of legislation, or of any other kind of premeditated common will. The organic conception cannot be any sort of universal visualizing. The organic interpretation cannot be the universal aim of research among social phenomena. For understanding of social phenomena in their totality the *pragmatic* interpretation is at all events as indispensable as the "organic."

2. Even in the case of social phenomena which do not hark back to a pragmatic origin, the analogy between them and natural organisms is not universal, it does not comprise the totality of their character. It is rather of a sort which touches *certain sides* of their character (their function and their origin), and accordingly the organic interpretation alone cannot procure for us all around comprehension of the same. To this end, therefore, other types of theoretical research are necessary, which are in a sort of partnership with the so-called organic conception.

The business of the theoretical social sciences is to expound the general character and the general correlation of social phenomena as such, and of particular ranges of the same (e.g., the phenomena of economics). They discharge this duty when, among other things, they exhibit fractional social phenomena in their significance and function with reference to the whole social combination. The problem now in question involves, meanwhile, neither the totality of the tasks of the theoretical social sciences nor the analogous problem in the realm of natural organisms, namely the totality of the scientific tasks in the realm of nature. Even if the legitimacy of the so-called organic type of research is recognized to the extent above provided for, determination of the laws of coexistence and succession among social phenomena *at large* remains the task of the theoretical social sciences, determination of the laws of the reciprocal limitations of the same is merely a special branch of social research.

3. But even in those respects in which the analogies in question appear to superficial observation to be real, they are not precise, far less are they of a character which is based upon clear insight into the nature of the social phenomena on the one hand and of natural organisms on the other. Consequently such analogies cannot be either the basis of a methodology of the social sciences in general, or of any special department of social science. The mechanical carrying-over of the methods of anatomy and physiology into the social sciences is untenable even within the narrow boundaries above indicated.

The so-called "organic" interpretation could at the utmost be adequate only to a portion of social phenomena, and only with reference to certain of their aspects. Here again the interpretation must not be taken over literally from the natural sciences, but must be the outcome of independent research into the nature of the social phenomena guided by the peculiar aims of social investigation. The method of the social sciences in general, and of political economy in particular, cannot be literally anatomical or physiological. Moreover even in those cases in which the sociological problems are of a sort which manifest a certain similarity to those of physiology and anatomy, they are not really borrowings from anatomy and physiology. They are rather only *sociological* in the strictest sense of the term. The carrying over of physiological and anatomical discoveries by analogy into political economy is such nonsense that no trained methodologist would think it worthy of serious refutation.

The foregoing mistaken directions of research are obviously none other than those of a physiologist or anatomist who should uncritically carry over into his science the laws and methods of economics, or who should in particular

try to interpret the functions of the human body by the current theories of economics—for instance the circulation of the blood by the current theories of the consumption of goods; or the functions of the nerves by a description of the telegraphic system; the function of special organs of the human body by the function of the various classes of the population, etc. Our physiologists and anatomists in the field of economics deserve the same condemnation to which an investigator in biology would be exposed if he should propose a “sociological school of biological research.”<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, whoever understands the highly incomplete character of the natural sciences, even today, so far as they are dealing with the organic world, will scarcely fail to be most impressed by the humorous side of the expenditure of so much ingenuity in trying to explain the unknown by that which is still less known.<sup>2</sup>

While we may dismiss the idea of treating the proposed analogical method seriously, it is not my purpose to deny that certain analogies between natural organisms and social phenomena may have their uses in *exposition*. As a *method of investigation* the analogical program is a chimera. As a means of *exhibiting* discovered facts and relations it may nevertheless for certain purposes, and for certain stages in the understanding of social phenomena, have a value. The most eminent minds have often tried to explain to their contemporaries the nature of social phenomena, by comparison with organic structures. This has occurred even in epochs in which people in general were less capable than we are of seeing the force of such comparison. We may waive the question whether in the present stage of development of the social sciences, such pictures, at least for purposes of scientific exhibition, are not already obsolete. At all events they are certainly to be thrown aside in cases where that which purports to be only a means of presentation assumes the rôle of a means of investigation; also in cases in which the analogy is drawn not alone when it corresponds with the actual relationships, but when analogy becomes a principle and a universal tendency of research. For the followers of this tendency the author of the *Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*<sup>3</sup> has a fitting saying. He remarks: “Analogy, which offers to many an author

<sup>1</sup> But the botanists now sometimes refer to “ecology” as plant sociology.

<sup>2</sup> This is really the fatal objection to the sociological use of biological analogies as a means of exposition. The other objections have force against the technique as a means of research, but less force than appears. They are all vitiated in a high degree by the fact that they insist on misunderstanding what is . . . . . in analogies between physical organisms and what are conceived as psychical organisms.

<sup>3</sup> Menger translates *Wealth of Nations* by the word *Volkswohlstand*.

stimulus for occasional witty comparisons, becomes with writers of the sort referred to the axis upon which everything turns."<sup>1</sup>

In these references to the relation between the Austrian School of Economics, as represented by Menger, and the Sociological School, as represented by Schäffle, it has been necessary to get decades ahead of the entire development, i.e., to 1883. We must now return to the fifties in order to pick up another important thread in the story.

<sup>1</sup> Retranslated from the German quoted from Adam Smith, "History of Astronomy," in his *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* (edited by Dugald Stewart), p. 29. Basler Ausgabe von 1799.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE SOCIOLOGIZING MOVEMENT WITHIN POLITICAL SCIENCE<sup>1</sup>

This is the point at which it would be profitable to bring into the field of view all that can be reconstructed of the pre-sociological movement in France, especially the tradition most plainly marked by Montesquieu, Condorcet, and Comte.<sup>2</sup> This résumé has not attempted to cover all the antecedents of the American sociological movement. Its argument has been throughout that the movement was not isolated. It was a consequent of antecedents. We have exhibited only the group of antecedents whose relations to the American sociological movement are the most indubitable, and whose effects have been most prominent since the 1890's.

The present writer feels bound to emphasize the conviction that Ward improvised an entirely mistaken interpretation of cause and effect when he led Americans to believe that they owe sociology to Comte. This myth, which Ward started into circulation,<sup>3</sup> has ever since been accepted as self-evident truth. In fact, at the time of publishing *Dynamic Sociology* Ward had given no serious or at least no adequate attention to the antecedents of the demand which he voiced for a new science of society. The Preface to his first edition betrays his naïveté with reference to the evolution of social science since 1800. Without a suspicion that he was doing violence to the historical reality, he could and did substitute an unauthorized impression for the facts. He thus confused the record by inserting a dictum which is refuted by the evidence we are presenting. This reading of the actual facts is in no sense an estimate of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Encyc. Amer.*, "Sociology," p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> See "A Comtean Centenary," *American Journal of Sociology* (January, 1922).

<sup>3</sup> *Dynamic Sociology*, I, 1, 85.

merits of Comte. That is a problem by itself. No quarrel is involved with Bodenhafer, for example.<sup>1</sup> The present contention is that the evolutionary process in American sociology actually found comparatively little use for Comtean elements, and that the efficient cross-fertilization came from the German tradition.

The present writer made his first venture as a sociologist by printing in 1890 a syllabus of 110 pages for the use of Seniors in Colby College. Some copies were submitted for review, and someone not recorded disposed of the book with a curtness which was all that its intrinsic demerits deserved, but the particular form of the judgment seemed to the author a wild shot. Accordingly sometime during the year 1890 he entered on the interleaved sheet opposite the first page of the Introduction, the following memorandum. It is reproduced here because it is pertinent evidence as to more than one feature of the situation.

For the benefit of critics of a class represented by one who dismissed this syllabus with the astute dictum: "It exhibits the usual merits and defects of the Spencerian School," it is to be said that the system here outlined is anti-Spencerian Spencerism; it is egoistic altruism; it is social individualism. Critics who think they can tell the character of a system without reading an outline of it may possibly hesitate before selecting a ready-made tag for what follows in these pages. Whatever the merits or defects of the system, they are certainly not those of any single master, or any single school. To Christian Ethics I owe the fundamental conception of the Good as grounded in the nature of God. To Utilitarian philosophy I owe the perception that concrete good with which we are practically concerned is a function of the nature of man. To Comte I owe my conceptions of scientific method, and *my consequent wonder at the comparative uselessness of the method to Comte himself*. To Spencer I owe the same debt which a subsequent surveyor owes to a preliminary explorer of pathless ground. To what I like to think of as my share of triumphant common sense, I owe my abomination of the *laissez faire* social doctrines which Spencer first glorifies, then abandons. In other words, the label of no school will ever cover the thought here sketched. Such as it is, it is the author's own version of social wisdom.

This memorandum may be trusted as indicating in principle the state of mind of all the earlier American sociologists except

<sup>1</sup> "Comte and Psychology," *Proceedings of the Amer. Sociol. Soc.*, Vol. XVII, 1922.

Ward. In the first place, the writer was not long in discovering that his syllabus contained not a system but a hodgepodge. In the second place, he was not long in discovering that the methodology which he thought he had taken over from Comte was being displaced by a methodology of his own derived chiefly from reconsideration of the whole body of social science criticism to which he had been introduced by the Germans. Something like this went on in the minds of most of the American sociologists. We were not committed to any theory except that traditional history and economics were failures, and that a better way might be found to interpret and improve human society. Our minds were in a ferment of reaction between all the antecedent impressions which had gone into the making of our intellectual state. A review of the syllabus mentioned emphasizes the reference to Comte above quoted. He had advertised the need of a "science of society," and he had made a plausible argument about its place in the "hierarchy of sciences." In these two respects he helped the present writer to articulate vague feelings for which no adequate expression of his own had been found. In both respects, however, the writer found that after one or two more years Comte ceased to be edifying. He soon parted company with him for a long attempt to find reality by the method of Schäffle.<sup>1</sup> As the latter began to be found wanting, the present deponent gradually developed the tendency reflected in the other syllabus to which frequent reference has been made in this argument.<sup>2</sup>

Returning from this degression to the subject of the section, we cite von Mohl, as we have previously treated representative historians and economists, not as necessarily the most energetic agency of the tendency which he is chosen to illustrate, but merely as a representative of the tendency. He amply shows that the movement did not begin with himself, and that many men beside himself gave impulse to the movement. While he does not fully agree with Ahrens, he stops only a little short of the explicit judgment

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chapter xvii, above.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., *Encyc. Amer.*, title "Sociology."

that Ahrens is entitled to rank as the chief promoter of the movement to develop a distinct *science of society*, parallel with the *science of the state*. It is nevertheless more convenient to take von Mohl as exponent of the movement. His presentation of the argument is more compact than that of Ahrens.

In brief, the movement among the German political scientists to form an independent science of society, which culminated about 1855, so far as the political scientists themselves were concerned, was an interesting blend of mysticism and objectivity. It was an attempt to found a science of a supposed entity, viz., "society" quite as unreal as the supposed entity "state." That is, German political philosophy of the period posited an existence, "the state," which to our minds appears to have been conceived as occupying a definite portion of space, above, outside, and independent of people, but brooding over and controlling people by sovereign power. The fact that the most arbitrary state that ever existed was in a real sense of, for, and by the people, and could not have existed otherwise, does not seem to have disturbed this philosophy, nor to have interfered with its use as the working presumption for the corresponding political science.

Briefly, by processes of suggestion which we cannot attempt to analyze, certain political scientists began to be impressed by the perception that there are considerable ranges of human activity which are not primarily political. Thereupon their activities were conceived as constituting an entity, to be called society, presumably occupying its preserve in space, with relations similar to those of the state toward people, and presenting subject-matter for a science to balance the science of the state. We may represent this conception graphically by two intersecting circles, the one labeled the "State," the other "Society," the contents of each presenting the material to be controlled by a distinct "Science."

Here was a dualism as difficult as that of the supreme church and the supreme state in the era of Henry and Hildebrand. Our immediate concern is not its defects as philosophy or science, but

its instrumental value in the drive toward objectivity which we are observing; especially in that portion of its outcome which appeared in the differentiation of the American type of sociology. It is impossible for us to establish specific connections between the Ahrens-von Mohl group and the earlier American sociologists. The latter, however, certainly did start with a conception of "Society," if not identical with, at least closely related to, that of the Ahrens-von Mohl group, as the subject-matter about which a new science must needs be created. The whole section in von Mohl's first volume, entitled *The Political Sciences and the Societary Sciences*<sup>1</sup> might well be incorporated into our material. Space permits only brief excerpts.

The section begins in this way:

The marking out of a knowledge area usually begins historically not with the sharp logical definition of the whole idea that is fundamental, nor with precise bounding off from contiguous areas. Both the need and the possibility of such by no means always easy undertakings begin to make themselves felt only after a considerable quantity of ideas and facts have been assembled and considered, after particular doctrines have been worked out, and the relations to life in all respects have become more distinct. Then only, but assuredly then, arises the subjective necessity of excluding and bounding: i.e., the scientific demand for eliminating that which is alien, which follows fundamental principles. Therewith also arises the practical demand for control of the entire material, in order that no gaps may be left, and that attention be not diverted to matters which belong to other men and other doctrines.

Not infrequently the definite awareness of the common conception, and consequently of the content and extent of a science, arises relatively late. Especially may it happen that an alien area may long not be excluded. This may be in consequence of a lack of precision in the dominating conceptions, which permits inclusion of heterogeneous facts and principles; or because no attention is given to a certain subject-matter, and thus its nature may remain uninvestigated. The latter is possible indeed even in the case of very important relations of life, or in the case of entire provinces of the psychic world. Suddenly then a new idea, or a previously unconscious need, may rouse the slumbering powers and may operate as a ferment and solvent.

Once the need of a definite exclusion and delimitation has arisen, the work must proceed with circumspection and prudence. It need not be argued that

<sup>1</sup> *Die Staatswissenschaften und die Gesellschaftswissenschaften*, pp. 69-110.



a science cannot arrive at completeness, whether in content or in form, so long as it has no intrinsic unity, and so long as it is uncertain what subject-matter it is to bring within the scope of its consideration. In particular, neither is a logically tenable sub-division and correlation of the particular components possible previous to a determination of boundaries and an inventory of assets; nor can the history of the science be undertaken consciously and critically, or even with correct reference to material and biography, so long as heterogeneity reigns in its premises.

At this moment the sciences of the state have reached such a turning point. That the state is the unitary organism of the total life of the people, and therewith that the science which embraces and interprets it is in antithesis with the science of the individual life, has been clear and recognized since human relationships have been grasped in their nature and have been logically expounded. Public law and private law; public finance and private thrift; civic history and description of life; have for thousands of years been regarded as distinct areas of thought and knowledge. It would accordingly be wholly superfluous to rehearse here the long familiar conceptions in order to be clear to oneself and to one's readers about the boundary lines of political science on this side. The case is different with a differentiation between the life of the state and the life of society, and with precise definition of conceptions and determination of boundaries between the respective sciences. Only now has this become possible, and consequently it has become a demand. Only quite lately have we arrived at a definite recognition that the life which men lead in common by no means has its existence in the state alone; but that intermediate between the sphere of the single personality and the organic unity of the life of the people there are many life circles which likewise have communitary objects as their aim, which do not originate from or through the state, even if they are already present in it, and are of the highest significance for weal or woe.<sup>1</sup> These two circles of thoughts and doctrines, which for more than two thousand years have appeared to be similar, or at most as part and whole, have now shown themselves as essentially different, and must also be treated separately, so that henceforth they may exist side by side as dissociated but equally privileged divisions of human knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

This is one of the cases in which life has brought science into movement. The fact of the various orders of life circles was in existence ever since human beings were together. There was need only of clear vision for recognition

<sup>1</sup> What was the supposed nature of the supposed intermediacy? Was it spatial, or logical, or conceptional in some other sense? One may labor in vain to decide precisely what picture the vague figure of speech suggested to the writer's mind.

<sup>2</sup> This figure of spatial side-by-sideness, or graduated up-and-downness, instead of functional togetherness of sciences, still gums up the imaginations of most scholars.

and discrimination. But this was precisely the lack. Science remained blind, although, from Plato on, the communitary reality aside from the state was often sensed and vaguely mentioned, and particularly a number of peculiar and eccentric minds now treated this relationship with artistic playfulness, again in wrathful paradox in the attempt to make it tell against the existing conditions. These writings appeared to be equally beneath the notice of serious scholars and of intelligent statesmen. They passed merely as diversions in moments of leisure. At last the word *Society* was uttered; at first by visionaries and their followers; then gradually also upon the rostrum, in the public house and in the secret assemblies of conspirators; it was borne aloft as a banner in frightful street battles. Then eyes suddenly opened. The whole indifference was converted into measureless alarm, so that now the formerly quite unknown word acted as a head of Medusa, which petrified the accustomed habits of freedom and the demands of the cultured and the moderate, and in a land otherwise not content with a reasonable measure of liberty, made possible an otherwise incomprehensible reign of lawlessness. It was not long before the seething in the market place and in the hovel had produced a numerous literature. A part of it was intended only to spread and incite wild revolutionary schemes, if not redistribution of goods by robbery. Other writings undertook the intelligent and not merely admissible but urgently necessary task of dismissing the conception of that existence which is distinguishable from the state and from the individual spheres of life—the needs, the present and the future of *Society*.<sup>1</sup> Thus through word and deed a quite new object of consciousness, volition and thought came into existence. What at first appeared to be wholly vague and even nonsensical gradually acquired form and relative sanction, and it stood out with increasing definiteness in its contrasts with the related but still the different. Yet not all the promoters of political science have been able to make up their minds to admit the legitimacy of this new modelling of things. Many, however, of those who are actually entitled to a vote are agreed as to the necessity of the separation between State and Society, and consequently they concede the necessity of a separation of their scientific preserves and systems.

While, therefore, singularly enough, until the most recent times insight and will passed by unsympathetically, a new and great task is now presented. The science of society must be established and developed. Particularly its boundaries with respect to political science are to be determined. This has, moreover, not merely significance for society, but almost equally for the state and the science of it. In fact this new science will make it possible to elimi-

<sup>1</sup> So far, this was precisely the task which the early American sociologists set for themselves. It is impossible to tell precisely how far their content for the term "*Society*" differed from that of men like von Mohl.

nate from the old irrelevancies with which it has thus far been burdened; in fact a whole series of practical questions will now for the first time find their correct solution.

It might appear as though it would be sufficient for the purpose of this work—which proposes only contributions to the history of the *political* and not also of the *social* sciences—to take merely general notice of this change in the treatment of the political sciences, so that a secure staking out of the region to be traversed may be possible, and a standpoint gained for evaluating many hitherto necessarily confused doctrines. More precise consideration shows, however, that in the present condition of the new discipline a bare application of its results cannot so out of hand occur. Rather must, in the first place, its own sort of investigations be undertaken, and points of attachment must be gained upon its own responsibility.

Up to the present, indeed, even those who recognize the necessity of the new science are by no means settled in their views about it. If a secure basis for delimitation and judgment is to be gained, the promoters of the new science must make their own way and drive down the boundary stakes as they go along. Only in that event can one be secure against being diverted into byways by leaders who are not agreed among themselves.

For going so far afield compensation will be found also in the fact that, in the course of the investigations about the societary questions, opinions and writings will be discovered which in many ways refer to the political sciences, and facilitate later judgment of the same.

In the following section (pp. 72-88) von Mohl reviews and characterizes the attitude of the political scientists up to date toward the facts which he distinguishes as societary,<sup>1</sup> and in the third section (pp. 88-101), he elaborates his own conception of the concept "Society." For the present purpose it is enough to state that his analysis consists virtually in the enumeration of sample groups, peculiarities of which he briefly suggests, which are either partly or wholly outside the range of political science. Thus: (1) *Stände* (vocational); (2) *Gemeinden* (parishes) as something more than administrative areas; (3) economic associations (laborers, promoters, capitalists); (4) nobility; (5) clergy; (6) artisans; (7) peasants; (8) land owners; (9) castes; (10) races; (11) creedal

<sup>1</sup> On p. 77 von Mohl casually mentions Comte. I had overlooked this fact when I made a statement to the contrary. *Encyc. Amer.*, title "Sociology," p. 212.

groups; (12) the educated strata versus the uneducated; (13) the family, etc.

With the foregoing indication of von Mohl's outlook, we may dismiss him from consideration. The essential point is that a group of German political scientists at the middle of the nineteenth century came into view of societary problems, in terms which correspond essentially with American formulation of sociological problems today. That is, they assumed that there are phenomena of many human groups besides the state and subdivisions of the state which must be investigated, and that a distinct science is needed for the investigation. We need not wonder that the further proposals, by such men as Ahrens and von Mohl, for the organization of the needed science were unworkable. Our present knowledge of developments in the line of these suggestions does not enable us to trace the sequence between von Mohl and Kohler. It is to be hoped that followers of Deans Pound and Wigmore in this country will write this chapter in the history of methodology.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, for more reasons than one, it is memorable that Heinrich von Treitschke took it upon himself to extirpate the Ahrens-von Mohl heresy. In 1859 he published a monograph entitled *Gesellschaftswissenschaft, ein Kritischer Versuch*. It was an argument to the effect that political science was amply able to deal scientifically with all groups in human society, and that a new science for that purpose would consequently be superfluous. Instead of silencing forever the claims of the innovators, Treitschke's opposition served to keep alive the spark which had been kindled. Whether a direct connection can be made out between these mid-century sociologists and those who succeeded in winning a place in the sun, is one of the questions which must remain for the present unsettled.

<sup>1</sup> A note on p. 750 of Small's "Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXI (1916), is so worded as to convey the impression that von Mohl, like Treitschke, opposed those who demanded a new science of society. Just before the note was written I had given in a lecture substantially the same account of von Mohl's relation to sociology which appears in this chapter. The blunder is therefore without excuse.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY IN THE UNITED STATES

We have thus followed the growth of a tradition of objectivity. It did not so much precipitate dogmas as it enlarged and clarified consciousness of the complexity of human relations. It stimulated awareness of the many-sidedness of the requirements, if there is to be competent research into these relations. It induced keenness of discrimination between mere fictionizing and opinionizing about the human lot, and discovery of actual correlations of cause and effect. It produced among the most teachable learners a deep humility of conviction that the human mind had been mostly meandering in the field of social discovery, and that serious research was due to begin.

All that has been said in this survey thus far might be compressed into the single sentence which has been repeated in various versions, viz., *Sociology has a venerable genealogy*. Sociology was not like Topsy, not even like Minerva, born in complete maturity from a single creative brain. Sociology is a branch of the great trunk of social science. Social science itself has been developing into increasingly definite self-consciousness, and consequently into increasingly adequate self-expression. Sociology is merely one of the latest articulations of this completer self-expression by the great body of students of human experience.

This outline has doubtless provoked the questions, perhaps it has encouraged the corresponding attitude—What of it? What does any body care? Why is it worth while to dig up the record of all these people who are no more to us than we to them?

This is the answer: Whatever we may construct as a logical statement of what ought to be true, it is true that *we cannot be as*



*intelligent as we might be about the present problems or the present processes of any science, unless, among other things, we have joined company with the people who have at length differentiated the processes; in other words, unless we have acquired our sense of the present condition of that branch of knowledge in part by the historical approach, i.e., our sense of the present condition is not a sense at all, it is a numbness, without this historical approach. We do not fully take in the problems as problems, unless to a certain extent we have put ourselves back into the state of mind of people before our time who were pioneering through blind trails that opened at last upon the problems of our own time, and were experimenting with devices for dealing with pioneering difficulties.*

A secondary reason was also referred to in the introduction, viz., that this historical approach enables us to reduce the amount of duplication into which we might be betrayed if we were ignorant of what had been attempted, with what positive and negative results, before our time. In the survey thus far is many a clue to things to avoid, and things to continue, in the present pursuit of social science in general and of sociology in particular.

This chapter will be repetitious in the sense that it will characterize the beginnings of the American sociological movement, and to a certain extent its continuance, from two or three slightly varied angles. As an eyewitness, and as a participant, the writer has been impressed at different times by different aspects of the same facts, and he hopes that his testimony and judgment about the facts, in slightly different versions, will be of service to future students of the movement. The story has also been told at some length in a previous version.<sup>1</sup>

Few historical facts are better attested than that the tradition which we have sketched was at once transmitted to the United States.<sup>2</sup> It was not taken over bodily. It was not reproduced

<sup>1</sup> Small, "Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXI (1916), 721.

<sup>2</sup> No attempt has been made to complete the catalogue, but without referring to earlier and later decades, as an index of the thought movement the following list is

here inscribed upon tables of stone, visible, intelligible, categorical. It was brought over piecemeal. It was brought as impulse, as preferred valuation now of this factor, now of that in the tradition. It was brought as ambition to count in the work of bringing forth things new and old from the scripture of human experience, and of using them so as to help American society become wise unto salvation. In some cases it was a conviction of the woeful superficiality and vacuity, or at best fractionality of everything in the world at the time, which passed as scientific interpretation of any part of human experience. In these cases it was not a ritual, not an authority, it was a ferment, brewing a new attitude, a new procedure toward all problems of knowledge and conduct of human life.

In most cases (to change the figure) the shock absorber was the traditional division of social science in which each of these recruits enlisted. In a few cases the traditional divisions of social science became so uncomfortable that bearers of this or one of the other parallel traditions began to yearn and then to design for an *independent science of society*, to achieve understanding of the human lot which the older social sciences had failed to interpret. We need not apologize for their superfluity of sanguineness. If they had not been actuated by zeal in excess of discretion their variant in social science might not have been appreciable for generations.

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impressive. It includes merely the men whom the writer recalls as having studied in German universities during the seventies, on the whole the most stimulating decade in German social science: William G. Sumner (in the previous decade), Marburg and Göttingen, Social Science; Herbert B. Adams, History, Johns Hopkins, Heidelberg, 1876; John W. Burgess, Political Science, Columbia, Leipzig, Berlin, 1871-73; Richard T. Ely, Economics, Johns Hopkins and Wisconsin, Halle, Heidelberg, Geneva, and Berlin, 1877-80; Henry W. Farnam, Political Economy, Yale, Strassburg, 1878; Frank J. Goodenow, Political Science, Columbia, Paris, and Berlin, 1879-82; Arthur T. Hadley, Economics, Yale, Berlin, 1878-79; George E. Howard, Sociology, Leland Stanford, Nebraska, Munich, and Paris, 1878-80; Edmund J. James, Political and Social Science, University of Pennsylvania, Halle, 1878-79; Simon N. Patten, Economics, University of Pennsylvania, Halle, 1878; E. R. A. Seligman, Economics, Columbia, Berlin, Heidelberg, Geneva; William M. Sloane, History, Princeton and Columbia, Leipzig, 1876; Albion W. Small, Sociology, Chicago, Berlin, and Leipzig, 1879-81; Frank W. Taussig, Economics, Harvard, Berlin, 1879; William H. Tillinghast, History, Assistant Librarian, Harvard, Berlin, 1878-80.

It turned out that for several of these men the American Historical Association (1884) or the American Economic Association (1885) became a halfway station between traditionalism and sociology. The connection between each of these bodies and the tradition we have sketched is plain.<sup>1</sup>

The entire tradition, of which we have indicated only some of the most outstanding elements, together with much elaboration to which we have been unable to give space, was partly the undivided inheritance with other heirs, partly the creation of the men who formed the *Verein für Socialpolitik*. It determined their plane of thinking. It molded their attitudes. It formed their policies. Much of this tradition was mobilized in the formation of the American Historical Association. The American Economic Association was formed in conscious and avowed emulation of the *Verein*. Its organizers transfused the spirit and much of the creed of the parent-body into the current of American thought. The American Sociological Society was incubated within the American Economic Association, with crossings from the Historical Association. The sociologists carried along the same tradition, and developed certain of its implications beyond the limit set by the historians or the economists.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For index to history of the two associations, see Small, *ibid.*, pp. 776-84. The remainder of this outline is parallel with that monograph from p. 748.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 779-85. Students who pursue the study of methodology might well, in this connection, follow the professional career of Karl Lamprecht (born 1856) as an exhibition of the effect of this tradition upon one German historian. Lamprecht was not a sociologist, but it is evident that if he had migrated to the United States, he would have shown more sympathy than most of the American historians ever had with the sociological movement. An introduction to Lamprecht's variation in historical methodology may be found in the article by Earle Wilbur Dow, "Features of the New History," *American Historical Review*, III, 431-48. For Lamprecht's own documentation of his crusade, see the bibliography in the twelfth volume of his *Deutsche Geschichte*. (For these references I am indebted to my colleague, James Westfall Thompson.) The most important of Lamprecht's controversial writings are (1) *Alte und neue Richtungen in der Geschichtswissenschaft*, 1896; (2) *Zwei Streitschriften*, 1897; (3) *Die historische Methode des Herrn von Below*, 1899; (4) *Die kulturhistorische Methode*, 1900; (5) *Moderne Geschichtswissenschaft*, 1908 (translated by Andrews with the title: *What Is History?*); (6) *Einführung in das historische Denken*, 1912.

To anticipate a conceivable though unreasonable objection, we add the superfluous remark that if Americans had never heard of the Germans they would still have had a tradition of their own, derived from the many other sources of their intellectual life. Sure enough! Americans had not lived in a vacuum, nor was German thought their only medium of existence. Our statement is that the American intellectual atmosphere, without the German admixture, would not have contained the variants that could have generated the sociology which actually appeared, and when it appeared.

It came about that by 1890 the academic atmosphere of the United States was thick with germs of ideas which came from or through this German tradition. The consequence was not, as has often been charged by Americans who mistrusted the German influence, a program of mechanical copying or simian imitating of German methods. It was rather a self-respecting effort to learn and apply all that was legible in the experience of the Germans in projecting a procedure of our own. If only for examples of what not to do and how not to do it, German social scientists between 1800 and 1890 would have been well worth studying. Their academic follies, rightly considered, are full of instruction. We have turned the searchlight rather upon some of the constructive ideas which they developed. Not as patterns, but more as tonics, these ideas actually entered into the formation of a distinct tendency in social science which German professors presently, partly in ridicule, partly in admiration, referred to as the "American Science."<sup>1</sup>

If there had been no other impulse to innovation, the stimuli which we have described would have been enough. In fusion with the other influences which we have not traced, they created a

<sup>1</sup> Herbert B. Adams, who was one of the most influential promoters of the spirit, not the letter, of the German drive toward objectivity, told me that he had never once opened a "*Heft*" of his German notes since he returned to this country. I can vouch for one more identical case, and I fancy these instances illustrate the rule.

movement which today need not shun comparison, whether as to quantity or quality of its effectiveness, with the influence of history, or economics, or of political science. We must specify that Lester F. Ward, whose influence was for a long time the most evident factor in American sociology, avowedly represented the Comtean succession, while William G. Sumner and Franklin H. Giddings developed more immediately, though not exclusively, the initiatives of Herbert Spencer.<sup>1</sup>

American sociology is now so well established that it can afford to be self-critical. It no longer needs to rest its claims on bombastic proclamations of what it hopes to do, nor upon inflated estimates of what it has done. While we gratefully recognize the educational value of sociological study for those who have devoted themselves to it during the past generation, the results to be passed along, as permanent acquisitions, to the next generation, are to all outward seeming meager. This form of statement should be corrected by reference to the enormous mass of insights into specific group reactions collected by local surveys, by social analysis, by the case method, by the anthropological and ethnological sociologists and by the social psychologists. Referring now exclusively to the contribution of sociology to objectivity in general scientific method, its function thus far has amounted chiefly to constructive criticism of the limitations of the technique employed by the other divisions of social science, and to the sharpening of an armory of tools for further warfare against the powers of darkness. More literally expressed, we have been doing work which will equip our successors with categories of social inquiry, most of which, and even the most important of which were not above the threshold of consciousness when the sociological movement began.

<sup>1</sup> One division of the English sociologists is committed to fabrication of a legend to the effect that Le Play is the almost greatest fountain head of sociology (cf. Swinny, *Sociological Review*, XXI [1919], 3; already quoted in the Introduction). American sociologists were weighing the merits of the Le Play movement a quarter-century ago, but the cult failed to hold their attention. See *American Journal of Sociology*, I (1896), 802, and II (1897), 662.



In recent years changes have been rung frequently upon the proposition that the main achievement of political economy thus far has been the perfecting of its working categories. MacLeod presents the idea in his *History of Economics* (pp. 24 ff.). We have already referred to this author above.<sup>1</sup> He must not be understood as representing a consensus among English theorists; and even if his main theorem were indorsed, it is not probable that his table of particulars would be accepted. He is cited, therefore, merely by way of illustration.

Every science consists of two parts, first, general concepts or definitions, or a due classification of the quantities it treats about, and secondly, the laws which govern their relations, called by Bacon, Newton and many others axioms or general principles.

By that mysterious correlation which holds between reasoning and reality, it is invariably found that if concepts of things are framed which are true to nature, and results are calculated according to reasoning which is also true to nature, they will be found to correspond with reality. That is, if true concepts are framed, and truly reasoned about, results may be predicted. But if results are calculated, and it is found that they do not correspond to nature, but are palpably and notoriously erroneous, then we are immediately certain that either the concept or the reasoning must be erroneous. . . .

Now, the formation of definitions, or concepts, is not arbitrary, or dependent on the will of the writer. Their formation, as well as that of axioms, or general laws, is strictly subject to certain general philosophic laws. We may state two canons of fundamental importance:

- I. *The fundamental concepts and axioms of a science must be perfectly general.*
- II. *No general concept and no general axiom must contain any term involving more than one fundamental idea.*

The truth of this latter canon is manifest, because, if any term involve more than one fundamental idea, it limits the concept or axiom, which is contrary to the first canon.

Consequently, if we wish to bring economics to the state of an exact science, we must carefully examine all its fundamental concepts and axioms, and reduce them to the state of generality and simplicity required by the above canons. Hence, if we meet with concepts and axioms which violate them by containing several ideas, we must apply the general principles of inductive logic to discover which is the true general idea, and eliminate all other accidental, particular, or intrusive ideas.

<sup>1</sup> Chapter x.

MacLeod's schedule in accordance with these preliminaries appears in his table of contents (Book II) as follows:

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We need not commit ourselves to an opinion as to whether the foregoing is an adequate apparatus of economic concepts. We may trust the economists themselves for both additions and subtractions. The point is that the foundations of no science are fairly laid until it has reached precision in defining the elementary facts and relations with which it has to deal.

Nor need we turn aside from our main exposition to contend that the sociologists have worked out an adequate apparatus of elementary concepts. Our proposition is that working toward such an equipment is the most fundamental merit of general sociology thus far. The future must test the categories now most in use.<sup>1</sup>

We must refer to it later in another way, but it is in order to record here the further item, important enough in itself to mark an epoch in the growth of thought, that in the generation since the sociological movement began, the presumption that linear causation is the main connection of human events has given place to the presumption which we may call vortex causation. In other words, the early sociologists shared the idea of all social scientists at the time, that some single great principle would ultimately be discovered, running in the trail of chronology, which principle would be the sole master key to human experience. Whether we still believe that or not, we are not aware that there are any sociologists left who still think we can at present most profitably employ our time in search for such a principle. On the contrary, we are convinced that every actual social situation, innumerable cases of which we must learn to interpret if we are to arrive at objective understanding of life, is a resultant of causal factors which run in on that center from every point of the compass—to speak in a figure of only two dimensions. Among these numberless influences the consecutive or historical in a particular case may be greatest; but it may also be least; and it may have any place in the scale

<sup>1</sup> For a tentative list of sociological categories—not up-to-date—see Small, *General Sociology* (1906), pp. 401-3. A better winnowed collection is in use as subtitles in Park and Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, and samples of categories of another order are furnished by the chief titles in Ross, *Principles of Sociology*.

between the extremes. We are therefore less inclined to formulate questions of group cause and effect as problems merely or chiefly of one-direction causation. If we had to choose between alternatives neither of which is sufficiently objective, we should say now that the best picture we have of social causation more nearly resembles a chemical reaction than a cable transmitting an electric current straight down from the beginning of the world. If this were all that had come from the sociological movement, it would have been worth much more than it has cost.<sup>1</sup>

We have thus characterized in the most summary way the meaning of the sociological movement in the United States, from its appearance (marked, let us say, by the publication of Ward's *Dynamic Sociology*, 1883) to the time of this writing (1923). The essential history of the movement between the two dates is indicated by the title of this chapter. Stages in the movement are indicated by the literature listed under the title, "Development of Sociological Consciousness in the United States" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XXVII [1921], 226-31). All that our space permits by way of further interpretation of the movement will be devoted to selected phases of this development.

In his *Principles of Ethics* Herbert Spencer makes much of the difference between the sentiment of ethics and the idea of ethics. Borrowing that idiom we may say that the pioneers of American sociology were equipped with a high power of the sentiment of sociology, but we can now see that they lacked a dominating idea of sociology as a definite procedure. In place of a precise pivotal conception of sociology, there were feverish longings for a better way of interpreting human experience than the older interpretations had achieved. There were only slight resemblances between several types of experimental substitutes proposed by these innovators, for the methods which they declared abortive. The intervening generation has accomplished much dead work for

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Small, "Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXI (1916), 792-95.

which future scholars may or may not award full credit. The most prolific result of this dead work is the perception, now elementary and commonplace among sociologists, that human experience always and everywhere runs its course in and through groupings of persons. At first glance these groupings often appear to be permanent, structural, static—a family or a family institution; a church or a given ecclesiastical system; a state or a particular type of government; unionized labor, as contrasted with isolated workmen. In reality, these groupings, which for brevity we permit ourselves to indicate by the less precise substantive form *groups*, are always interactions of persons, that is, processes. We have come to see then that the inadequacy of which our present insight convicts the older social sciences is neglect to find out all that it is possible to discover about the forms, modes, methods, proportions, and intensities of these group processes throughout the range of human experience. Accordingly it has become the sociological division of labor first of all to elaborate the categories of group processes in which human activities occur; and secondly to supplement the other social science techniques by adding to their exposition of given human situations everything that can be discovered by reducing them to terms of these categories.

Whatever then may have been the hopes, and the ideals, and the definitions of the pioneers, sociology in the United States has come to be, first and chiefest, one of the numerous interdependent techniques by means of which research into the facts and the meanings of human experience is now conducted. The sociological technique consists in brief, first, of discovery of categories of recurrent group forms, group movements, group motivations, group appraisals, and group controls. So far as subject-matter is concerned, sociology deals with the same reality which has provoked the theorizings of all the rationalizers since men began to observe the human lot and reflect about it. Respectable as many of these systems are, considered as attempts of earnest men to correlate all that was known about human events, for sociologists they have



only the interest of material to be observed. As procedure, as science, they rate with sociologists as negligible except in so far as they bring to light or keep in the light facts which are pertinent regardless of previous theories. From our viewpoint as to the essentials of objectivity, nothing has any claim to our attention which does not proceed from or adjust itself to conceptions of the human reality which gather around these categories of group formation and processes. Everything strictly sociological pivots upon objectively established and precisely characterized group categories. As a practical matter, it is as undesirable as it would be difficult to keep treatment of the categories themselves sharply separated from application of the categories to interpretation of selected social situations.

It must be repeated over and over again that American sociology was, at first, hardly more than a negative movement. Not in spirit, not in purpose, not in prospectus, but in fact. At the start American sociology, always excepting Ward's system, supposed by its author to be in principle complete, amounted in effect to little more than an assertion that all the traditional ways of interpreting human experience were futile. Thereupon sociology became an assertion of intention to invent new and better ways to take the place of old ones. With the exception noted, sociology was not primarily a promulgation of doctrines about society. It was an assertion that better ways must be invented than all the rationalizers about society had practiced in their attempts to understand the fortunes of men in the past, and to point out wise courses for the future. The sociological movement in the United States was principally faith that the needed better ways were discoverable, and gradual transformation of that faith into search for the better ways. Thus what was first scarcely more than a hope for improvement presently became the voluntarily assumed duty of realizing the hope. The movement which we have called "The Evolution of Sociological Consciousness in the United States,"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *American Journal of Sociology*, XXVII (1921), 226.

has been the partially unconscious effort to discharge this obligation. It is impossible to say how many men, even now, are clearly aware of this vocation. Not by any means all that calls itself sociology has emancipated itself from the old habits of sheer rationalizing, in blissful unconsciousness that, barring happy accidents, objectivity can be arrived at only by systematic use of some specialized intellectual apparatus which establishes credible contacts with reality. Impelled by the desire for objectivity which was our inheritance from the scientific tradition of nineteenth-century social science scholarship, a few men have persisted in making out group categories fit to be tools of more reliable exposition of human experience than had previously been used; or better, group categories which are capable instruments of research into aspects of human experience neglected by previous interpreters; aspects which cannot be ignored without leaving explanations of human experience at an unconvincing stage. The essential part of sociology, then, is not opinions which sociologists have arrived at about the realities of human experience. The essential part of sociology is the thought apparatus which sociologists have developed for reaching insights into human experience that entitle them to any opinions at all. In other words, the right of sociologists to recognition as scientists is valid only in so far as the categories which they use, and their manner of using them, enable them to probe at some points deeper into human reality than other techniques have penetrated.

Returning to our point of departure, the one impulse which the early American sociologists had in common was belief that there is such an entity as "society"; that this entity is the inclusive mystery of human experience; that social science, as it had developed up to their time, was an aborted and futile provision for interpreting this mystery, and that the time had come for invention of a science which would be equal to the task in which previous social science had failed. No apology for these enthusiasts is necessary. Their conception of the calling wherewith they were

called was grandiose, but they had the courage of their convictions, and they accepted the mandate which they believed to be their commission. The results, so far as results are visible, have been in the first place a radical transformation of the sociologists' conceptions of the reality which they proposed to investigate. This supposed thing, "society," has steadily resisted expression as a thing at all. It has gradually resolved itself into a near-infinity of group relationships and processes. Accordingly, the procedure, the technique, which sociologists have found themselves obliged to invent, has turned out to be mental tools for detecting and interpreting all sorts of group phenomena. Meanwhile sociologists have very greatly modified their conceptions of the relation between their own technique and that of the other divisions of social science. At the same time sociological procedure has differentiated itself into research into numerous distinct phases of group relationships.<sup>1</sup> When we speak of the sociological movement, or general sociology, in the United States, we mean then *everything that followed the expression of deliberate and avowed purpose to work for a scientific interpretation of cause and effect in human society at large.*

In this connection reading of the article "Sociologie" in *La Grande Encyclopédie*, is recommended. It was published in or about 1900. In some respects it presents a better case for sociology than American sociologists had been able to agree upon at the time.

As we have repeatedly urged,<sup>2</sup> from 1883 to the present moment sociology has been a *something in the process of becoming*. Over and over again, meanwhile, sociology has been defined as though it was, and as though it was destined to remain as it was.<sup>3</sup> In fact, sociology was principally, and most respectably, *an earnest attempt to become something*, and what it from time to time got to be was

<sup>1</sup> See *Encyc. Amer.*, title "Sociology," p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., *ibid.*, under subhead "Description."

<sup>3</sup> A lurid instance is Mr. Benjamin Kidd's article "Sociology" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, referred to below.

covered only in part, and often in least part, by the successive definitions and descriptions. Still less has sociology been finally determined by these antecedent definitions.

At many points in this survey it would have been in order to remark that no "science" has turned out to correspond precisely with advance definitions of the science. It might have been asserted over and over again that sociology is among the most evident cases under this generalization. Long before a few scholars had explicitly declared their dedication to a scientific adventure for which they adopted the name "sociology," there were sporadic attempts in different parts of Europe to construct a "social science," or a "science of society," or (after 1839) a "sociology." In each instance the desideratum of a new social science was advertised along with more or less explicit details as to the constitution of the desired science—what it should be, or what it should do, or both. In no case have the subsequent activities of sociologists conformed very closely, or very long, to the definitions. The substantial reason for this is that science cannot be essentially a thing, it must be essentially a procedure. Science is first endeavor to find out something. Science is secondarily endeavor to set in an order corresponding with their operating places in reality whatever items may be learned about reality. What a science actually is, as it develops, is determined by the nature of the things which it proves possible to find out, by the nature of the things which prove to be beyond finding out, and by the procedures that prove to be available for the feasible finding out.

In principle a science is like an exploration of an unknown country. Suppose the survivors of the first winter in Plymouth, instead of being content to struggle longer for existence on Cape Cod, had formed the more ambitious purpose of finding out the geography of the earth's surface in its utmost reach toward the west. We can hardly make our minds in imagination as blank with reference to the experiences that would be involved as the minds of the Plymouth colonists must have been. Let us suppose

that before starting to realize their ambition they had composed a definition of the procedure which would supposedly accomplish their purpose. If it went beyond the most non-committal commonplace—like “We must go west as far as we can”—it would begin to be inadequate before an exit had been made from Cape Cod. Suppose their powers of endurance and of achievement had been supported by the miraculous reinforcement which alone would have sufficed to sustain the enterprise. The incidental result would have been that the adventurers’ conceptions of the procedure which would actually be involved in the completion of their effort would have been revolutionized before they had covered the first tenth of the distance. Several reconstructions of their conceptions of adequate procedure would have followed before they were within sight of their goal. They would have been compelled to extemporize a technique of locomotion adaptable to all the topographical variations, from meadow brooks to the Mississippi, from seaboard forests to swamp and prairie and desert and mountain. They would have been forced to devise a technique of provisioning, adaptable to the parts of the journey in which they could live from hand to mouth off the country, and to those parts of the journey in which calculation would have to be made for supplies to last, under different climatic conditions, through months of scarcity. They would have been obliged to devise a diplomacy of intercourse with different types of savages, a diplomacy convincing enough to insure themselves against all the antecedent probabilities of extermination. Suppose all this were accomplished. What would be the probable degree of resemblance between the final account of the actual *modus operandi* of the trek from Atlantic to Pacific, and the visions of what the journey would be like which occupied the minds of the colonists before they left Plymouth?

No exact parallel can be drawn between this imaginary experience and the features of evolving social science, but in principle the analogy is perfect. If we use the term “science” in the sense of “approximately complete knowledge,” not merely in the sense



of an orderly arrangement of such makings of knowledge as a certain limited procedure may gather, then science is predetermined by the relations of cause and effect which operate in the reaches of reality in question, not by any definition of scope or method which can be arrived at before those reaches of reality have been explored. For example, whether the "history" of Herodotus or Thucydides is to be classed rather as good reading, from the standpoint of literary critics, or as science, from the standpoint of the modern methodologist, depends upon the degree in which the books respectively have reflected all the different kinds and ratios of cause and effect, as interpreted by all the pertinent rules of evidence, involved in the Persian and the Peloponnesian wars. History, as science, is not merely that reflection of a portion of the past which has been cast upon the mind of a given writer by the particular mirrors which happened to be at his disposal. History as science is reconstruction of past units of experience by use of all the mirrors which reflect any important factors in the given experience, and by correction of all the reflections, and refractions and optical illusions by all auxiliary means at command. In other words, and more literally, history as science is necessarily, in the first place, incessant improvisation of increased accuracy and comprehensiveness in the discovery of evidence, and of increased objectivity in the organization of discoveries reached by the improved methods, especially by correlating historical results with the findings of other techniques.

The like, on the side of method, is the case with each division of social science and with social science as a whole. Speaking now particularly of sociology, it is a humiliating fact that, until now, as a rule, all the sociologists have blandly disregarded this foreordination of nature. In recent years there have been notable exceptions to the rule; but in general the sociologists have duplicated the age-old folly of defining their science before they had been taught what their procedure must be by hard experience with their phenomena.

Each of us who has tried to promote development of sociology has had his own doctrine of what sociology will turn out to be when it is developed, and each of us has tried to give that doctrine a share in the elaboration of sociology out of proportion to the share which belongs to docile search into the facts. Gradually, however, reality is prevailing over preconception. In effect, each man's doctrine as to what sociology is has turned out to be a hypothesis as to what sociology may be. Each has attempted to vindicate his hypothesis by using the apparatus which it gave into his hand. The aggregate result has been, first, negatively, demonstration of the futility of an enormous scrap-heap of sociological preconceptions. Then positively the result has been, first, accumulation of an enormous body of insights into actual types of recurrences in human experience; second, visualization of all these recurrences under the aspect of group formations; third, development of a capable but constantly differentiating apparatus of categories for further interpretation of group processes.

The most notable exception to the rule of becoming was Lester F. Ward.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps never in the history of thought has a man in middle life launched a rounded and complete system of doctrine, and lived to be a leader of a company of younger men glad to make that system their point of departure, and for years produced monographs and books in elaboration of his doctrine which all the younger men were bound to study, yet with no more modification of the original structure of his doctrine than Ward ever made in the system proclaimed in his first book. The consequence has been that Ward's work occupies in general sociology very much the place of the Tower among the institutions of London. *Dynamic Sociology* was such a massive work that it cast a spell over a small group, and then recruits to their ranks, and it held them in an attitude of awe for years, even while some of them were forging

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXI (1916), 749 ff.

ahead in paths that carried them beyond its control. Yet in principle *Dynamic Sociology* had better chance for permanent influence the day it appeared than ever after. It was as though a duplicate of the Tower of London had been created in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. *Dynamic Sociology* affected the few who valued it most highly, and the present writer was of the number, as a pillar of fire. But the currents of the world's thought were already moving so fast that its leadership was bound presently to be overtaken and passed.

It is impossible to assign a date for this readjustment of sociological values. The present writer had not formed the judgment just expressed at the time of Ward's death (1913), or at least he had not advanced it from his subconsciousness into verbal expression. He has no means of knowing how many of the American sociologists at that time were aware that the high spots of their thought-world were no longer identical with those of Ward's. The fact was, however, that this colossus of generalization<sup>1</sup> held a place of splendid uniqueness for decades. Other men, meanwhile, felt themselves obliged to begin at the bottom and to construct a sociology of their own, partly with the help of Ward, and partly in spite of him.

With the exception of Ward, the story of the earlier sociologists in the United States may be told most objectively in this way: Taking the date 1890 for convenience, there were a considerable number of social scientists—historians, economists, etc.—who, with little or no knowledge of one another, were moved by a common unrest about the unconvincing character of everything that had been done up to that time in the way of interpreting human life. These men felt that social science in its current forms was all shallow, and unsatisfying and misleading. They wanted to do something about it. In sober truth, they cannot be likened more tellingly than to the spoiled boy who was crying at the top of his

<sup>1</sup> I.e., Ward's system of cosmic philosophy, with sociological corollaries, as set forth once for all in *Dynamic Sociology*, and the later books which were virtually not additions to but expositions of it.

voice, whose governess questioned, "What do you want?" He answered, "I don't want nawthin', I want ter want somethin'."

Even Ward, who was more sure of himself than any other among the pioneers, does not begin by expressing himself directly about the problems of sociology. He speaks rather of the place which belongs to sociology in the company of other sciences. Thus he says:

The subject of the classification of the sciences and of the natural order of phenomena will come up for a more special consideration in an early part of the work.<sup>1</sup> Its introduction here is for the purpose of calling attention to the position and to the importance of sociology in such a system. Whatever may be the difficulty in fixing the position of any other science, that of sociology, as Comte clearly showed, must occupy the last place in the series. Its highly special character, its great complexity and, above all, the dependence which a careful study of it shows it to have upon all the rest, all point unmistakably to the end of the chain as its only natural position. Not only does it depend more or less upon all other sciences but *it cannot be shown that any other science is in the least dependent upon it*. This last fact is even more decisive than the others as to its true character and place. Its logical position at the end of the series is further shown by the manner in which it comprehends all other sciences. It is, as it were, all sciences combined, embracing all that they embrace, together with a large differentia.<sup>2</sup>

In detachment from one another, as a rule, the majority of these innovating men were already, in various ways, vexing their souls with some form of the question: Just what is it that I want? It is probably already too late to reconstruct the precise course by which this question began to be articulate and to reach the ears of others than those who uttered it. An incident in the writer's recollection will give an idea of how attenuated the process of evolving a sociological group was at first. It was at a meeting of the American Economic Association. Someone had the enterprise to suggest that those who were interested in sociology should gather for an informal talk. The picture that remains in the writer's mind indicates that more than twenty responded. We were seated in a

<sup>1</sup> I, 97, 187, and chaps. iii-vii.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, p. 9.

circle within a private dining-room of a hotel. The general impression that we were feeling each other out, and hoping to get some suggestion that would be a credible pointer for our pent-up impulses against conformity to traditional social science, is all that remains in our memory about the session except this episode: The only individual in the company who lingers in deponent's recollection as having spoken was the president of a theological seminary in New England. He had been quite free in utterance. Presently he asserted: "What we need as a starter for sociology is a radical reconstruction of the classification of the sciences." Lester F. Ward was sitting directly opposite the writer. He vigorously nodded assent and bent forward with a look of eager interest in what might follow. Someone prompted: "Dr. —, what would be your idea of the way to reclassify the sciences?" Dr. — hesitated, but after a little urging, in which Ward joined, he continued: "Well, I suppose few of you will agree with me, but in my judgment there never will be any reliable sociology until it has its place in a system of sciences founded on theology." Ward threw himself back in his chair with a gasp that was almost a groan, and a legible look of disgust and despair. The effect on the rest of the company was probably identical in all but degree. So far as our information goes this was the last appearance of that particular Doctor of Divinity as a constructor of sociology. Nor have we any evidence of any positive outcome from that first meeting of American sociologists.

Unsatisfied bewilderment was the original state of the American sociologists, if they may be referred to as a group before they arrived at visibility or self-consciousness as a group. Thus when the present writer published his syllabus, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, in 1890, his Thesis I read:

*Sociology is the science which has for its subject-matter the phenomena of human society, viz., the varieties of groups in which individuals are associated, with the organization, relations, functions and tendencies of these various associations.*



In other words, *Sociology is the science which combines and correlates all the special social sciences.*<sup>1</sup>

It would require a high voltage of imagination to invent a more cheerful *non sequitur* unafraid. The first sentence contains an explicit premonition of the conclusion about the group center of attention toward which the sociologists converged during the following thirty years. The second sentence affirms a judgment which the sociologists have meanwhile become more and more inclined to disclaim, which at best is not involved in the first.

On the other hand, Professor Giddings from the first maintained that sociology is the *fundamental* social science, thus, apparently, contradicting Ward's formula. (The qualifier *social*, however, furnished ground for arrest of judgment as to the measure of disagreement.) In *Principles of Sociology*,<sup>2</sup> Giddings says:

While sociology in the broadest sense of the word is the comprehensive scheme of society, coextensive with the entire field of the special social sciences, in a narrower sense, and for purposes of university study, and of general exposition, it may be defined as *the science of social elements and first principles*. . . . Moreover, sociology is the inclusive and co-ordinating, only as it is the *fundamental* social science. So far from being merely the sum of the social sciences, it is rather their common base.

From our present outlook it is easy to see that each of these formulations was an expression of the author's wish and longing and ideal rather than of anything that had been or could be realized. Moreover, and indicative of the unsettled state of mind as to precise problems and programs, while stoutly maintaining such incongruous views, these innovators actually at the same time gave asylum to the opinions which they fought, as though they might somehow be harmonized.

In spite of the jumble of unreconciled ideas, of which the foregoing are samples, the innovators were doggedly one in the Hamlet attitude:

The time is out of joint:—O, cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right!

<sup>1</sup> Schäffle, *Bau und Leben*, I, 17, also IV, 480.

<sup>2</sup> 1896, pp. 33 ff.

They were trying to present Hamlet, however, as an optimist, by amending so that "cursed spite" should read *blessed grace*.

Future sociologists will gain a clear perspective of their place in general social science in the degree in which they adjust themselves to the facts about the visible beginnings of sociology. They must realize that the early innovators had virtually only two working principles in common—indeed, we might better say *not yet* working principles—one negative, viz., *Current methods of explaining human affairs have failed to give us all that is knowable about human affairs*; the other positive, but still merely formal, viz., *Methods may be devised for learning more about human affairs, and we are going to try to devise them*. Reduced to their substantial content, all the professions and programs of the sociologists, from the earliest to the present, have amounted chiefly to workshop bulletins that the devising of more penetrating search processes was still going on. Whatever knowledge has been gained incidentally, and the mass of it has been great, is still inferior in significance to what has been learned about ways of approach to the reality of human experience in order to compel it to reveal the most of itself. It was necessary even for the sociologists to stay a long time in the purgatory of obscurity before they assimilated the primary lesson that, if human reality is in any sense a simple addition of the fortunes of individuals, that sense is qualified by the further fact that human reality is also incessant actions and reactions of groups. In pursuit of the facts, and the consequences of the facts, under this latter aspect of reality, sociology has now found its distinctive vocation. Indeed it may be said that *sociology has become the first attempt to organize a technique for scientific interpretation of human experience upon the basis of the group hypothesis in contrast with the individual hypothesis*.

From the present standpoint, then, the case for sociology may be stated in this way: There are manifestations of energy which have their impulse at one end and their impact at the other in people. These manifestations make up a cosmos of interpersonal

relations. It extends over and through all the time and space which ever have been and ever will be occupied by human beings. Wherever two or more human beings are together givings and takings of influences occur between them. The involutions of these reciprocities of influence are the processes of the interpersonal cosmos. In and through these interchanges human facts have their most credible values. The realm of these relations is just as real as the physical cosmos. In its aspect as a correlation of processes of personal influence, it challenges investigation just as literally as the movements of the heavenly bodies provoke astronomers' inquiries. There can be no such thing as social science worthy of the name until interpretation of human affairs includes and assimilates, among other things, the completest possible investigation of this interpersonal cosmos. Incidental to the required investigation, an account of all discoverable modes of interpersonal influence is demanded, with formulation of the involved relations of cause and effect.

The sociologists began to grow articulate in attempting to express their feeble grasp of these facts in terms of "society." Our latest conceptions of the outstanding facts and problems voice themselves in terms of "group processes."

By way of summary, we compress into a few paragraphs an appreciation of the American sociological movement as a whole.

The true story of the American sociological movement would be a treatment of the theme: *Up from Amateurism*. The early sociologists were grimly in earnest in their ambition to do something about "Society." As it looks from our present standpoint, they were pathetically uncertain as to what or how. The whole intermediate period has been occupied mostly indirectly and unconsciously in answer to the questions: What? and How? At the same time the bulk of the American sociologists' activities has been given to study of social phenomena with various degrees of detachment from these fundamental questions: What? and How?

These promiscuous labors have, however, preserved the common trait of desire to improve "Society," either in whole or in part, along with the negative trait of not wanting to do their work in the manner in which historians and economists and political scientists had done theirs. The result has been enormous accumulation, both edifying and confusing, of observations within the range of societary phenomena, and a considerable volume of practical conclusions about the different areas of "social work." More significant than all these results, from the methodologists' standpoint, has been gradual discovery of a criterion by which to distinguish between amateurish and scientific procedure in sociological pursuits. That criterion had been semi-consciously employed long before it was formally defined. It did not arrive at the rank of a demonstrated methodological principle until Bodenhafer showed that it had actually become the distinctive mark of sociological procedure.<sup>1</sup> The demonstration was not an operation of logic, but an exhibit of gravitation in practice. In a word, the sociologists had found their distinctive function in the discovery of categories of group structure, and group processes and group behaviors, and in applying those categories to interpretation and control of human situations.

Our aim at this point is not to magnify sociology, not to assert for it any specific ratio of importance among the social science techniques, but simply to bring its distinguishing features as a technique into clear light.

In brief, a sociologist, properly speaking, is a man whose professional procedure consists in discovery or analysis of categories of human group composition or reaction or behavior, or in use of such categories as means of interpreting or controlling group situations.

This definition is by no means acceptable to the majority of sociologists. It seems to many of them unduly to restrict their range of operations. On the contrary, it merely defines the range of operations within which one functions as a sociological specialist. No ban of law or caste bars the sociologist from functioning in

<sup>1</sup> *American Journal of Sociology*, XXVI (1920-21), 273, 425, 588, 716.

any other portion of the field of social science for which he is equipped. In order to function with the peculiar competence of a sociologist, however, one must be an expert in the interpretation of group phenomena as such. Unless one is at the same time an expert in the use of some other social science technique, his contribution, as a scientific specialist, to solution of problems of social theory or practice will be limited by his ability to make analysis of group phenomena throw light upon subjects under investigation.

In other words, a man may be greatly interested in some phase of human fortunes, he may be exceptionally learned about certain aspects of human conditions, he may be notably subtle in certain types of reflection about human affairs. In spite of these facts, he may have no more nor other claim to the designation "sociologist" than he has to the title "historian" or "economist" or "philosopher" or "psychologist." He may be simply a rationalizer at large, with no claim to recognition as an intensive worker in any scientific specialty.

This discrimination is not a mere matter of vindicating words. It is a necessary means of distinguishing functions, and of discovering degrees of scientific competence. A man might have read hundreds of historical books, and be able glibly to cite in human annals more or less distinct analogues for any social situation, past or present; yet he might have no scientific equipment as a historian. A man might have insistent opinions and large stocks of miscellaneous information about every current question of national economic policy, yet without the primary qualifications or outfit of an economist. So a man may be an eminently useful citizen, an important public functionary, and an author of useful books about social facts, yet conspicuously not a sociologist. The late Carroll D. Wright, with his misnomered volume *Practical Sociology*, is an instructive example. In short, a humiliating proportion of the so-called "sociology" of the last thirty years in America, both inside and outside of the goodly fellowship of scholars who were self-disciplining themselves and one another into the character of scientific specialists, has been simply old-fashioned opinionativeness



under a new-fangled name. This confession is in the nature of a purgatorial experience in qualifying for salvation.

In other words, a scientific specialist is constituted not principally by the subject-matter of his interest but by the peculiarity of his procedure. The Dunes, at the southern end of Lake Michigan, are an object of various intensities of interest to the casual picnicker, to the believer in park preserves, to the man with the hoe, to the florist, to the geologist, to the physicist, to the chemist, to the botanist, etc. This fact does not authorize picnicker, park enthusiast, man with the hoe, or florist to figure as geologist, physicist, chemist, or botanist. No more does it authorize geologist, physicist, chemist, or botanist to claim authority as one of the other types of specialists. The climb of a few up to the genuine rank of scientific specialists has been through mazes of obscurity, not only in the public mind, but to a certain extent in their own minds, about this relationship. Schoolgirls visiting a workhouse or a criminal court, or their mothers in club meeting assembled discussing the pros and cons of birth control, are reported in the newspapers, and perhaps rated by themselves as "sociologists"; and, what is more, genuine sociologists have had no accepted standards by which to draw the line between real and spurious sociology. Thanks to a more mature sense of reality, rather than to authorized definition, we do not, except facetiously, refer to the hot-stove group of neighbors at the general store, when the talk turns to grumblings about the tax-rate, as "economists."

The time will come for relentless weeding out of our literature masses of confusing material consisting of opinions about phases of human experience, to be sure, but not for that reason entitled to consideration as sociology or any other social science. The discourses of an ancient Church Father or of a modern free lover on the morality of sex relations may, as social phenomena, be equally subject-matter for sociology, but probably neither of them can properly be included in the category "sociology." Sociology, like any other procedure which is entitled to the rank of science, is the application of a distinctive method to a designated type of problem.

Criticism, like death, loves a shining mark. We are not at a loss for an illustration to make our observations concrete. Let us consider the article "Sociology" by Benjamin Kidd in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. What is the matter with it? First and foremost, it is the deliverance of a man who may have called himself, and may have been called by others, a sociologist, but who shows to members of the craft no authentic evidence of qualification for membership in their guild. It is imposing sententiousness without the saving grace of sociology. It is simply a specimen of what Professor Robinson calls "rationalizing." Mr. Kidd's opinions are worth whatever they are worth, but if they were immigrants landing at Ellis Island they would be returned to the port of departure for lack of identification. A concatenated scheme of opinions about things in general is not sociology. It is just what it is, and we are under no obligations to make out its place in the scheme of human knowledge, beyond entering our protest against confounding it with sociology.

On the other hand, the sociologists cannot too soon abandon the notion with which they set out, that they have, or are on the way to discover, a unique and complete interpretation of human experience. At best, sociologists have found a clue by means of which social science as a whole closes in on the facts and meanings of human experience somewhat more adequately than our knowledge could extend without this addition to research equipment. That is all, and that is enough.

Enough for beginnings, not for endings. Our descriptions have merely located the point at which sociology, after wide perturbations, found its center of equilibrium. It would be neither pertinent nor possible to calculate the content of its future operations. We may draw the moral, however, that not sociologists alone, but social scientists in general, will be squanderers of the lessons of experience, unless they habitually allow to criticism of their methodology, and to calculated co-operation between all of their techniques, a more constant and decisive rôle in their procedure than has been their rule in the past.



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